

# **Sony gets real** World exclusive report on PS3's darkest game

Uncharted 2 shots and info Hands-on with Killzone 2 Resident Evil retrospective Every PS3 game scored











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PlayStation 2 NINTENDUDS



**ACTIVISION** 

# PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

## Welcome



The main perk of being a benevolent dictator with his own magazine is that you

get to choose what goes in every month. That, and all the girls. So this month I've blown 14 pages on Resident Evil because I've completed every game in the series, I'm obsessed with its idiotic plot (which we've finally made sense of) and can't wait for the next instalment in March. Fill your boots, zombiephiles.

Next up: 12 sweet pages devoted to Heavy Rain. Stunning visuals, hugely ambitious design, a real-world setting and genuinely adult themes means it ticks pretty much all our 'want' boxes, and it was a no-brainer for this month's cover. The third big-hitter in our trifecta of exclusives is Uncharted 2: Among Thieves. The original remains the only game the entire team agree on, and getting the scoop on the sequel kept spirits up during the final, dark weeks of 2008. (Even dictators have to boost morale.)

Next month we reveal the result of the Game Of The Year votes, and plough into 2009 with the world exclusive review of Killzone 2. Thanks for all your support over the last 12 months, and see you on the other side.

## **Tim Clark** Editor-in-Chief

## **COVER FEATURE**



Behind the scenes with Quantic Dream's

visionary game of crimes and choices.

## **FEATURES**



54 ROOT OF ALL EVIL

Come for our massive Resi 5 hands-on, stay for our complete guide to the horror series.



See page 36

IN THE MOOD FOR... COPS

The good, the bad and the blatantly corrupt. Say 'ello, 'ello to PlayStation's boys in blue.





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Nathan Drake's next adventure revealed!

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## SUPER SF II TURBO HD REMIX

Ryu, Ken and co get a hi-def makeover. The boy Blanka? Still hideous, I'm afraid.



## LOCOROCO 2

Sony's glorious singing blobs return in arguably the cutest game ever made.

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Next issue on sale 20 January

## PlayStation Official Magazine - UK

## Who we are...



### Tim Clark Editor-in-chief

Wasted entire week off playing Master League and listening to 5 Live. Or: living the dream.

Game of the moment SSFII Turbo HD Remix New year's resolution Start own religion



#### Ben Wilson Deputy editor

Destroyed our last shard of credibility by taking a key Sony contact to see McFly live in concert.

Game of the moment Street Fighter IV New year's resolution Move to Boston



#### **Leon Hurley** Commissioning editor

Saw Heavy Rain. Bought French sweets that cut our mouths like razor blades.

Game of the moment Fallout 3 New year's resolution Remember passport



### **Rachel Penny** Agenda editor

Her beaming smile kept Team OPM sane during the Xmas frenzy. (Her drawer full of Syndol helped, too.)

Game of the moment LittleBigPlanet New year's resolution Be nice to Ditum



## **Nathan Ditum**

Stubbornly spent the month criticising SFII for being too retro'. In other words: he's not very good at it.

Game of the moment

New year's resolution Give every game 7/10



## **Helen Woodey**

Operations editor

Applied her usual 'smash all the buttons as fast as I can' method while trying to beat Tim at SFII. Lost. Heavily.

SSFII Turbo HD Remix New year's resolution NEVER back down

Write to the team at opm@futurenet.com

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Stories everyone's talking about...

Dream car Citroen/GT5 lovechild is a real beauty. Page 12



**Genero-men**Why PS3's big
action heroes
look similar.

Page 14

**PS3 keypad**We test the typing add-on.

Page 15

Rock gear Complete guide to peripheral compatibility.



Zombie hit Why the new Resi movie is, shockingly, ok.

**▶** Page 22









# The big man is back

Nathan Drake returns in Uncharted 2: Among Thieves, hunting for the secrets of Shangri-La

Sorry sackboy, but ever since the release of last year's Uncharted, Nathan Drake has been hands down our favourite PS3 hero. He's unlike anyone else, brilliantly combining the sort of clumsy qualities we recognise in ourselves - cowardice in the face of physical danger, (hopefully) charming ineptitude in moments of crisis - with others we only dream of having, like a mean eye for head-shots and a witty wisecrack for every occasion. The quality of his first adventure - through the sweltering jungles of... somewhere, on the trail of a lost fortune belonging to his ancestor Sir Francis - was so high that a follow-up was always just a matter of time. And now, finally, we've scooped the first shots and info on his return, courtesy of LA-based developer Naughty Dog.

## Smuggler's run

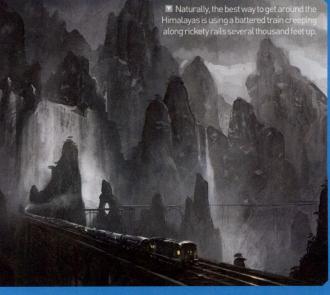
Here's what we know. Like the first game, and the tradition of matinee adventures it follows, Uncharted 2 is

based on one of those unexplained meeting points between myth and mystery (the Ark Of The Covenant, King Solomon's Mines) which strike a chord in the imagination and make for kick-ass stories. Subtitled Among Thieves, Drake's new adventure follows the path taken by explorer Marco Polo on his way home to Venice following a an 18-year stay in the court of the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan. Polo left China with 600 men and 14 ships which - so the story

**PlayStation** 

009





goes – were heavy with untold treasures. But by the end of the 18-month voyage, only a single ship and 18 men survived...

Despite writing a famous account of his travels in the Orient, Polo never revealed what became of those lost at sea. His last words were, "I have not told half of what I have seen", which as well as being a really cool and enigmatic way to sign out is also a pretty incredible place to kick off a new adventure game.

And that's exactly what Drake does. We catch up with him in Nepal, as the city is torn apart by gunfights and Drake searches for a temple that will lead not only to the resting place of Polo's sunken fleet, but also reveal the explorer's secret mission to find

the mythical utopia of Shangri-La and a great treasure – called the Cintamani Stone – hidden there.

Naturally there's some competition, and racing against Drake to find the stone is a powerful criminal and his hired army of mercenaries. The taut cover-based shootouts from the first game return, then, but with tons of tweaks and improvements. For instance? Drake can now carry riot shields and explosives during firefights, has new acrobatic abilities like free-climbing and monkey bar swinging, and (a niggly but crucial thing) grenades have been given their own button to make them much more combat friendly.

Big strides have been made with the AI, too, answering our (minor)





## GT dev makes a car Polyphony collaborates with Citroën on 789bhp concept

It was only a matter of time before Gran Turismo developer Polyphony Digital crossed the line between fastidiously recreating other people's cars and designing its own. Unveiled at the Paris Motor Show, this mid-engined, two-seater concept coupe is a working replica of an original car now available for download as part of GT5 Prologue's Spec III update. The project is a

collaboration between Polyphony boss Kazunori Yamauchi and childhood friend, Takumi Yamamoto, who happens to work on the Style Citroën design team.

## Saxo appeal

Designed in just nine months, the GTbyCitroën marshals four fuel cells to deliver a mighty 789bhp and has a stealth bomber-stye rear conceived specifically to gives gamers
maximum visual drama as they play.
Kaz is clearly delighted by the results.
"To see the car take shape in-game
and then for real has been a truly
unique experience as our work
normally stays in the digital world. I
just hope I can get behind the wheel
and drive it on a real race track!"

Drive the GTbyCitroën now by downloading the latest version of GT5 Prologue (Spec III) from the Store.

Takumi Yamamoto (left) designed the car with Polyphony's Kazunori Yamauchi (right).

PlayStation Official Magazine UK





Character actors

Nathan Hale is your classic military man and the star of Resistance 2. Shane Carpenter became the square-jawed poster boy for disappointment in Haze Starkiller, meanwhile, played Darth Vader's beatch in Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, and Jet Brody works the scars and cybernetics for Fracture. Finally, Code is the genero star of Sony's forthcoming superhero sandbox adventure, inFamous, due out in May.

The buzzed dark hair, lantern jaw and powerful shoulders are instantly recognisable. From Nathan Hale to Jet Brody, the heroes of PlayStation's biggest action games look so alike they could be clones. Speak to any developer and they'll tell you how long they spent carefully researching and developing their hero's rugged features. So why do we always end up with the same rugged alpha male?

According to Beth Christiansen, a character artist for Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, one reason is that it acts as a type of visual shorthand. "The fastest and easiest way to set up a character is to fall back on visual elements that the viewer will

immediately identify with a type of archetype. There are common themes that identify a hero, or idealised figure: tall stature, muscular build, idealised proportions." Christiansen told us it's a way of tapping into the player's subconscious, subliminally telling them that the hero is someone special. Those thoughts are echoed by Paul Armatta, producer on Fracture, who explains how his team came up with a formula for their hero. "Jet Brody starts with a mix of GI Joe and Rambo and adds in a little John McClane and Han Solo."

Christiansen says there are technical factors, too. "The way that

the character looks on-screen during gameplay is a major consideration. Often, the proportions of the body are pushed even further, because the silhouette of the character needs to be read from a great distance, and while moving around on the screen." So a slender Zac Efron type just isn't going to cut it. Sorry ladies.

## You've got male

According to psychologists, macho looks come with emotional baggage. "Super-male faces are associated with characteristics such as dominance, aggression and therefore perhaps anti-social behaviour," explains Tim Valentine,





Why the new keypad peripheral is a godsend



GG M8 LOL BFF!!! Hopefully the days of messages like that, and having to ruthlessly cull our friends list as a result, will soon be over. The new wireless PS3 keypad, on sale now for £24.99, makes tapping out messages to trusted comrades/bitter rivals during online games much easier. Two arms on the keypad's back clip it snugly over the top of your DualShock, with its own bespoke sur, sur and PS buttons preventing any loss of functionality. Above these buttons sit an additional three. The first two instantly take you to your messages or friends list. The third, meanwhile, enables mouse-like cursor movements by dragging your finger across the keys. It's the keypad's only significant fail - stick with the analogue stick for browsing the net or navigating the XMB. A blue Shift key and orange Alt key sit on the top corners with the On/Off switch located down the right side. Lastly there's a USB port - essential for you to keep the keypad charged - along the top edge.

## Stroke of genius

Using the keypad becomes second nature rapidly, and it works superbly. It was supported in all ten of the games we tried it with. Chatting to fellow members of our club in FIFA 09 was significantly faster and easier; we saved a stack of time inputting details for created wrestlers in WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009; and keeping up with fast streams of chat in the Home beta was a breeze. And as proof that even the fattest of fingers will have no problem getting to grips with the small keys, we typed this story in Google Docs on the PS3 browser in just under seven minutes.



Goldsmiths University. Anti-social behaviour might not be what you want from a next door neighbour, but it's perfect if you're looking for someone to kick an alien's face in.

Even the short, military-style hair comes with a hidden agenda, due to differences in cultural expectations. Valentine told us, "Short hair is ethnically more ambiguous," which could help heroes be more appealing to a worldwide audience. In contrast, the androgynous teenagers with Toni & Guy haircuts in Japanese RPGs like Final Fantasy ensure a more niche audience. Jeff Carroll, producer at Red Faction developer Volition says, "Visuals that mean one thing in one region can mean something totally different in another. It's very difficult to balance."



"I disagree that he (Hale) represents the traditional FPS archetype. Other than the hair, you're right about that. He has to have short President, Insomniac

And the truth is that, as gamers, we like our men macho and military, and woe betide the developer who tries anything different. When the new Bionic Commando was first unveiled gamers complained about his whole look, and by far the biggest gripe was his new, trustafarian-style dreadlocks. As long as that happens, developers are going to keep playing it safe. It looks as though the attack

Bored of the bland or like your heroes handsome? Tell us what you think at opm@futurenet.com.



We check which instruments work with what

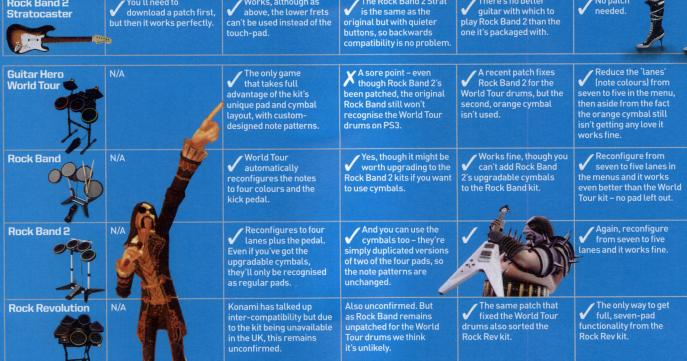
There are two good reasons for not buying all the assorted guitars and drum kits that come with the likes of Guitar Hero and Rock Band, Firstly, the combined cost of all that fake plastic rock is enough to cripple the economies of most developed

nations, let alone the disposable income of your average bedroom headbanger. Secondly, the resulting nightmare of dongles, straps and bulky drum kits is almost impossible to store without a custom-built house extension. Here, then, is our guide to

the inter-compatibility of PS3's various instruments and games, to make it easy for you to supplement your existing setup, or plan a new one from scratch. God bless rock 'n' roll.

Got a rock setup you're pretty damn proud of? Then we'd like to see it. Send pics to opm@futurenet.com.







## **6** Reporting from Home

How we went bowling, played pool... and got hit on

#### **Bull races**

Red Bull is the first brand to sign up to have its own island in Home. Instead of a drinks stall for getting your avatar jacked up on caffeine, the island will offer a virtual version of the Red Bull Air Races. "It's an easy environment for brands to take that first step into gaming," said John Beasley, Red Bull's marketing manager. Yes it's interactive advertising, but at least in this case that translates

Last time we visited Home it was to interview Sony boss Shuhei Yoshida. Back then, it was full of dancing journalists and not much else. Now though, it's packed with people on the pre-release beta trial. And, inevitably, they're almost all 'doing the robot'.

The shopping centre still has empty shelves, and most of the people in the main square seem to be idle, with little 'zzz' icons hovering over their heads. It turns out everyone is in the bowling alley – the place to be if you like mini-games and socialising with Mohican-sporting avatars. There are pool tables, tenpin bowling, and an arcade – and all you have to do to play

them is walk up and hit ②. One guy caused a stir with his Echochrome themed bodysuit – he told us he won it by playing the Echochrome minigame on one of the machines.

### Queue balls

The only catch to all the free fun is that the number of people who can bowl, play games or shoot pool is limited, so there's a bit of thumbtwiddling while you wait your turn. As we waited, our pretty blonde avatar is pounced on by a gang of men, who chat us up while dancing around us like 'N Sync escapees. You can talk to anyone around you

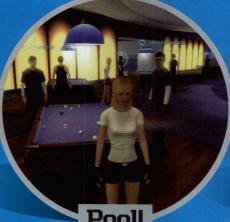
with a headset, but most people seem to favour typed TXT SPK.
Those we spoke to from the so far overwhelmingly male, 20-something populace were happy with what they've found, complaining only that there are too many men looking for women, and that you can't listen to your own music – both of which could change once the software goes on full release, hopefully as you read this.

So if you see a pretty blonde called teamopm sitting on her own by the Icebreaker arcade machine, ask her to dance. No Swayze stuff, mind.

Keep yourself up to date on Home at its official site: playstationhome.com.









Romance?



## The Big 10 Stories everyone's talking

Stories everyone's talking about



## That was 2008

## We revisit the PS3 highs and lows of the last year

So this is Christmas, and what have you done? Well, if you're PS3, you've had a strong second year, in which big hitting series like Call Of Duty and Grand Theft Auto continued to dominate. There were letdowns too, like the crackers European pricing of Rock Band and Mirror's Edge's failure to find an audience. So before you bust out the party poppers, neck a pint of eggnog and prepare to cheat on Faith with an even hotter, younger mistress (Sheva, we'll see you in February), take a moment to look back over the past 12 months. A time in which OPM turned 25 (issues, not

years, although our hair did go white overnight like The Exorcist); Trophies made their long awaited debut; and we were blessed with LittleBigPlanet, MGS4 and Bioshock. (About bloody time, too...)

What has been your highlight of 2008? Share it with us by emailing opm@futurenet.com









Jul











In what must rank as one of the year's biggest disappointments, much-hyped shooter Haze finally hits the street after a series of delays—and it's distinctly average, scoring 6/10 for its "clichéd



### Blockbuster beater











#### Silver anniversary



#### The Force is weak

not want. (On the plus side, 360



## No longer



## Jan

## COD victory ◆

l Of Duty 4 strolls away h the OPM Game Of The Year gong for 2007. It gets more than double the votes



May

The final nail in HD-DVD's coffin is harmered home by mega-studios Warner Bros and New Line Cinema when they confirm that they will only support Blu-ray from May onwards.



UK PS3 sales hit seven figures in the UK, 47 weeks after the console's release. In comparison it took 50 weeks to sell a million PS2s, while Xbox 360 took 60 weeks to hit the milestone.



a shooter based on the classic 1986 sci-fi flick. The influence and confirms acid blood is in. Acid blood! Want.



### Changing of the guard

Statuler rosinida, a Zz-year Sony veteran who originally green-lighted lco, is named president of SCE Worldwide Studios, replacing Phil Harrison – who becomes president and directeur général délégué of Infogrames, Atari's parent company.



GTAIVis finally released – and it's huuuuge. In the UK, it shifts 609,000 copies on its first day on sale across PS3 and Xbox 360. Across the globe the figure is even more eye-popping: 3.6million first day sales, raking in over \$310million.



Team OPM is reduced to tears of laughter on 1 April when told a new 50 Cent title will feature the rapper blasting his way through 'Middle Eastern' terrorists. The smiles disappear when Blood On The Sand turnes with the bar seal game.

Apr



On the back of the release of Prologue, frontman Kazunori Yamauchi warns fans to be patient for Gran Turismo 5. "There's going to be a massive amount of cars and a whole new range of courses. That takes a lot of time, so it won't be [out] until at least the end of next year."



The first PS3 shots of Prince Of Persia emerge, suggesting – eh? – that the royal freerunner has been coloured-in with crayons. Still, the gameplay looks good: signature acrobatics integrated into an open-world using an updated



songs featured in the game's background music

#### **MAG FTW**

Sony announces its most ambitious PS3 game yet: 256-player MM0 shooter Massive Action Game. Lead designer Andy Beaudoin promises to "immerse players in massive online battles on a scale never



Months after Resident Evil 5 was labelled as racist by website Black Looks, producer Masachika Kawata defends his game: We set the game in Africa and then obviously we had to make the indigenous people. We don't take racism lightly."



Oct



## Sep Rip-off Rock Band •

Almost a year since its release in the US, EA and MTV Games release Rock Band on PS3 int UK- at an astonishing L179.98 for the game and instruments, Harmonix's Greg LoPiccolo cites shipping costs of the oversized box and retailer mark-ups as the reasons behind the decision.



• EA's title win EA'S TITLE WIN
FIFA 0'9 and PES 2009 are released a
fortnight apart, with both games getting
9/10 in OPM, and the team split over
which is the favourite. There's no such
debate among the buying public, who
make FIFA the second fastest selling
game of the year behind GTAIV.

## **Big Daddy lands**

Eng Daddy lands
Amere 14 months after its Xbox 360
release, Bioshock finally surfaces
on PS3 – and it's still incredible,
scoring 10/10 in OPM. Our
colleagues/rivals are impressed
too – it goes on to average an
amazing metacritic score of 95.



hardware innovations that do excite: a limited edition 160GB PS3, PSP 3000 – and upgraded edition of the PSP Slim & Lite – and a Clip-on PS3 keypad (see p15).

### More war

nfinity Ward boss Vince Zampella tells us that his team is "in the throes" of designing the follow-up to Call Of Duty 4 - and, once again, it will have a Modern Warfare setting. We shoot AKs in the air to celebrate





## PS3 super fan takes control Kit Windsor reveals how he got his game on

Windsor. Unable to play consoles for seven years because of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Windsor decided he had to play Final Fantasy XIII after seeing a trailer for the

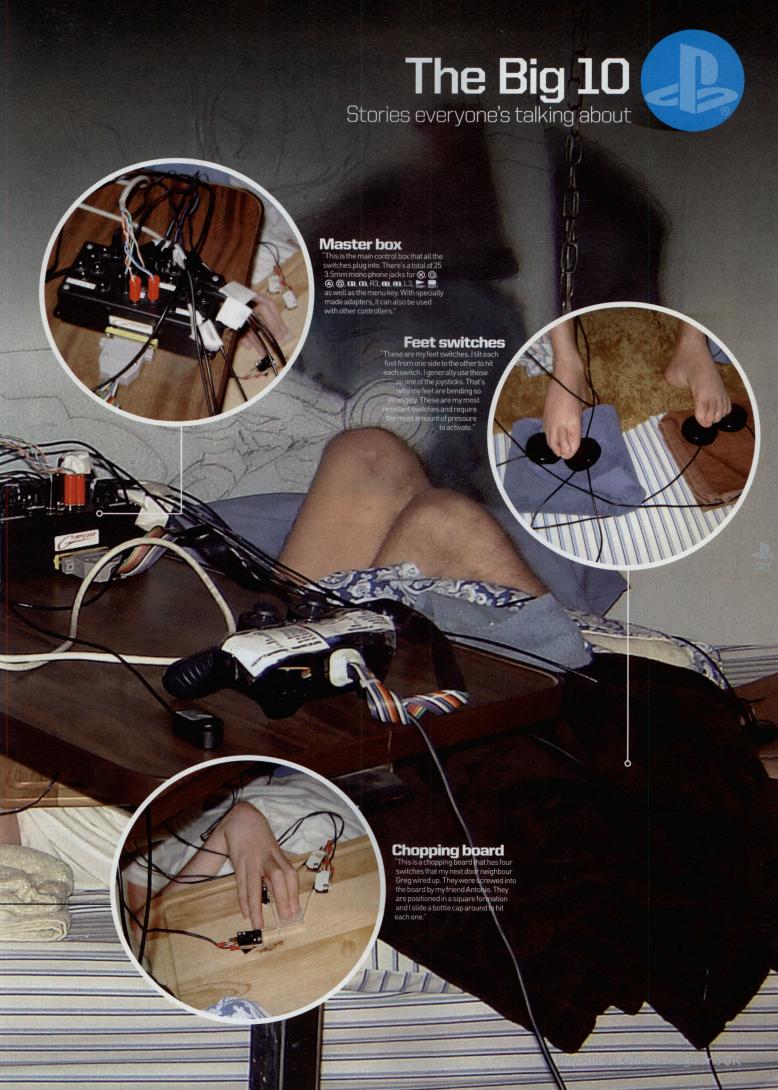
Mark Felling to build it. It works by



Reader talk
"I want to send the video
of the controller that I made to whoever is doing (Final Fantasy) XIII to show them how much they inadvertently inspired me.

## Sip and puff straws

## Joystick control



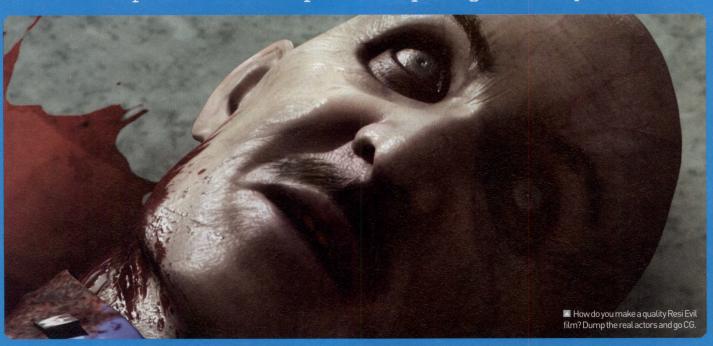


## The Big 10 Stories everyone's talking about



## Resi film: not rubbish

Capcom's new CG spin-off in quite-good-really shocker





### Monster hit

Degeneration director Makoto Kamiya is most famous for directing Kaiju

Having sat awkwardly through three movies of Milla Jovovich high-kicking her way through the zombie horde while wearing only a cocktail dress and a frown, Resident Evil fans could be forgiven for abandoning any hope of a decent cinematic adaptation. Then in rolls Capcom with its own full-length CG animated movie, Resident Evil: Degeneration. Set between the events of Resi 4 and 5, it unites Claire Redfield and Leon S Kennedy for the first time since the second game, in a zombie-filled actioner that goes off like a Stryker shot to the head.

The first half of the movie takes place in an airport - a terrorist group have unleashed the T-Virus on an

unsuspecting public, and Claire (with obligatory cute kid in tow) is stuck in the middle. Luckily, she has some experience with the undead (as we see in some cracking flashbacks to the events of Resi 2) and manages to hold her own until Leon arrives on the scene with a new partner in tow - a young recruit called Amanda, who has an Ashley-sized crush on her Blacktail-wielding boss. Later, the action shifts to WilPharma HQ, a company that seems to be carrying on where Umbrella left off. Apparently the firm will play a role in Resi 5 too.

#### Infectious fun

So is it worth a watch? Definitely. The voice acting is great, with the cast from the games gleefully wrapping their tongues around the trademark nonsense dialogue. Take Claire's line after being invited to the WilPharma HQ: "Sure. It's not like I'm scheming to infiltrate your organisation for my own devious means." There's plenty of humour – just wait till you see the idiot zombies trying to get off the plane. Fans will also dig the great little in-jokes (Redfield wielding a red and white umbrella), cameos from the games (who wouldn't want to see more of Resi 4's Ingrid Hunnigan?) and some fantastic looking (if not-guite-gory-enough) action. Paul WS Anderson? This is how it's done...

Resident Evil: Degeneration (certificate 15) is out on DVD (£19.99) and Blu-ray (£24.99) on 12 January.



Look at lovely Claire's sad eyes. It's been another tough day.



Good to see Vince from the Mighty Boosh still getting work.



"Right, that's the housework done. Now for those zombies.

# Are there *too* many games at Christmas?

OPM's naughty and nice disagree over the festive feast



Too many games? Madness. Unless you're the sort of person who has a nervous breakdown in Sainsbury's every time you have to choose a breakfast cereal, more choice is only ever a good thing. Remember the early days of PS3 when there was only a small selection of must-play games? I certainly wasn't skipping through the streets whistling a happy tune, and I don't remember anyone else doing it either.

## **Happy holidays**

The important thing to remember is that while you might not have time to play Fallout 3, LittleBigPlanet, the new Call Of Duty, Dead Space and Guitar Hero World Tour all at once, none of these games are limited edition. They're not going to magically dissolve before you get that chance to try them. If anything, it just means there's going to be plenty of bargain pre-owned copies in the shops right at the time when your pockets are bulging with



Says multitasking flibbertygibbert Rachel Penny

Christmas money. Thanks Dancer! Thanks Prancer!

Yes, there might be a bit of a feast then famine culture in the gaming world, but the big pile of amazing releases that are on sale now will be enough to see you through the next few months at least. I like the fact that so many games come out at Christmas. It's exciting. And it's the one time of year that I can get away with staying in to drink Snowballs and laser super mutants all day. And once I'm done with Fallout 3. I know there's plenty more to perk up a long, cold, miserable January. What more could any right-thinking PlayStation fan want?

Does the Christmas games bonanza fill you with joy? Email 'YES' to opm@futurenet.com



Yes Says resident Scrooge and father on a budget Nathan Ditum

I don't like having to make a choice between which brilliant games to play at Christmas. Admittedly, I say this as a man who always felt wrenching pangs of guilt when, as a child, I'd have to choose just one of my teddies to take away on holiday and leave behind all the others. But there's a more practical side to my argument too—namely, how can anyone afford to play everything essential, let alone everything decent?

### **Money matters**

Let's take a look just at the games which have scored 9/10 and above in our last two issues. Resistance 2? That's £40. And Mirror's Edge? £80. Far Cry 2 makes £120, Midnight Club £160, Bioshock £200, Fallout 3 £240,

Guitar Hero World Tour £280 (without instruments). So we're talking nigh-on £300 and that's without Dead Space, Prince Of Persia, Tomb Raider, Endwar or LittleBigPlanet. Who's really got that kind of money to throw

The sad thing is – and here we go back to the cold, weeping stuffed toys waiting for me in the dark – this means some of these uniformly excellent games won't be getting the love they deserve. And the saddest thing is, it's likely to be new, inventive but unfamiliar stuff – Mirror's Edge, Dead Space and (God forbid)
LittleBigPlanet – that suffers most. Considering those long summer stretches we go through each year without a triple-A title in sight, this is nuts. I get that publishers would rather gamble on the Christmas frenzy, but come on, won't somebody please think of the teddy bears? I mean games.

Are you Tiny Tim who's only allowed one slice of

# ESIGNERATION DEGENERATION



OF TERROR



HIGH DEFINITION PICTURE AND SOUND ALL NEW CGI FILM PACKED WITH SPECIAL FEATURES:

- INTERACTIVE PICTURE IN PICTURE
- THE "GENERATION OF DEGENERATION" FEATURETTE
- A LOOK AT THE RESIDENT EVIL 5 VIDEO GAME High Definition

OUT JAN 12 IT





## Agenda

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Hot opinion from those in the know.

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Sony
New kit beamed
down from the
Sony mothership.

34 Events
Your gamer's
guide to the
month ahead.



## From tiny acoms...

Milestones in the development of Rag Doll Kung Fu





#### Mock-up

This is a static mock-up done for the green light stage to give people a flavour of how the next-generation version may look. It uses the original 2D aracters from the PC game.

#### **Build one**

This is the first playable version of the game. At this stage the HUD is placeholder and the characters are still flat. First Publishable then improves lighting and adds high-fidelity characters.

#### **Ruild three**

This is the latest 'build'. The characters' facial expressions and weapons are now in place, while overall the graphics have a slightly glossier look. From here most of the work will be on fixing bugs.

sense in building something that's publishable when you're dealing with mechanics you might not understand. You may have to iterate quite a bit to make it fun. And the best way to do that is with low-polygon models. I have a game I'm working on at the moment with Housemarque - the guys behind Super Stardust. It's unannounced but the first prototype was done with just cubes. If it's fun with cubes it'll be fun with high-polygon models. What's important is that the core mechanic is done in high fidelity. So if what's important to your game is particle effects then that's the portion that really needs to be high fidelity.

#### First Publishable

At this point you know your mechanics, so you're going to build one portion of the game in high fidelity. And that's to set the benchmark for the rest of the assets you're going to use. For something like Wipeout HD, that might be one track with one ship going around. The ultimate is something that you could potentially ship on the front of OPM as a playable demo. It allows me to take it to Marketing and get people excited.

## Alpha to Master

At Alpha you're into full production. All the jigsaw pieces are there, we've just not put the jigsaw together. It should be possible to play the game through but there will be bugs. The start of Beta is where the content is complete, and you're focused on fixing the bugs and getting the game ready to master submit and go out to the shops. The idea is that you look for ways to crash the game; you look for inconsistencies. They all get flagged. For every bug you get a certain number of points allocated. 26 points and a game fails Format QA. Anything below that and if you're willing to take accountability then QA are happy for it to go out. Often if you were to submit the game again, say you're going to patch the game, they'll ask you to fix those bugs at the same time. The lifetime support of titles is a new thing for us."

## RUMOUR MACHINE

Insider whispers

console version



LittleBigPlanet for PSP is being developed outside of Media Molecule and will hit the handheld next year.



Smackdown vs Raw 2009 DLC will feature Ted DiBiase, Super Crazy, Charlie Haas and Evan Bourne as playable characters.



EA is working on its own series of Rock Band-style games.

Along with the upcoming Aliens: Colonial Marines, Sega has another big licensed sci-fi shooter on the way.

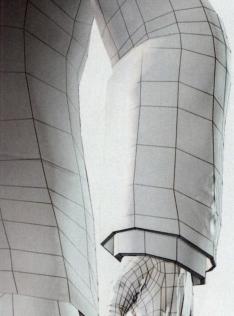


Plans are government agent Jack Bauer back to

Arenowned UK-based studio is working on a brand new, astonishing-looking urban crime game set for release in 2010.







Fleshing out the process

PSN games have modest budgets compared to those on Blu-ray, GTAIV had a budget believed to be around \$100 million, and took a staff of up to 500 three years to develop





## Want one, knit one

## Craft mag reveals how to stitch your own sackboy

Here's something we thought we'd never write... It's time to put down the Sixaxis, pick up the knitting needles and stock up on sack-coloured wool. The latest issue of Simply Knitting includes a pattern that will show you how to make your own cuddly version of PlayStation 3's biggest icon.

"As soon as we saw sackboy we knew we could knit him – and because he's done in chunky yarn, he's quick to knit up," said an excited Miriam Macdonald from the magazine. "Knitted toys are massively popular and we're often asked for patterns for licensed characters, so when we saw sackboy we just couldn't resist him. We've had great fun dressing him up!"

We're not sure we've got the dexterity (or capacity for shame) to do the little man justice, but we've put an order in with grandma OPM already. There's more information over at simplyknitting.co.uk – and don't forget, if you do manage to knit your own, send us a photo at opm@futurenet.com.



▲ The pattern is in issue 49 of Simply Knitting, on sale now.

## WHO SAID THAT? VIP quotes

"Set down the Guitar Hero; learn how to play an actual guitar."
Nickelback's
Chad Kroeger tells the kidz.

"We haven't announced anything yet... now f\*\*\* off!" **David Jaffe** on Twisted Metal.

"My kids play videogames."
If only we could talk **Angelina Jolie** into adopting us.

Infinity Ward's **Robert Bowling** uses his blog to call out World At War's producer as "Senior Super Douche".

## OPM HOT TOPIC

What's the most underrated PS game ever?



Barbara Gamlen International PR manager, LucasArts

"Ico. It's also the first game that made me cry. It deeply impressed me at the time, the rich, mysterious environments and the simplicity of the gameplay."



Rich Lemarchand Lead designer, Naughty Dog

"I think that The Mark Of Kri was years ahead of its time, Its stealth gameplay was very accessible and action-packed, and the art direction was absolutely staggering."



Jacob Minkoff Lead designer, Blue

"Ghost In The Shell. Its use of the Fuchikoma as a vehicle that could stick to walls and ceilings was innovative. No other ground-based shooter has been as truly three-dimensional."



**Dave Matthews**Principal art lead,
Monolith

"This is tough. I'm torn between The Mark Of Kri and Ico. I can't decide. Can I please pass on a different question so I can have both of these answers?"





## Coach, play me!

Tim Clark on becoming a legend in Pro Evolution Soccer 2009

There isn't enough space here to list all the things that are stupid and broken about PES 2009's 'Become A Legend' mode, but here are some highlights. 1) When you start out you have to play in the reserves for week after week. 2) If you play well, the manager will eventually let you train with the A team in yet more reserve matches. 3) Play better still and you might get picked for a place on the bench. But what constitutes playing well is arbitrarily decided by an equation that looks like  $[X+Y]^2=Z^2-2Y$ , in which X is

looks like (X+Y)²=Z²-2Y, in which X is not giving the ball away', Y is wandering out of position' and Z is 'scything down Joey Barton'. And here's the real kicker: it's possible to go an entire half without even touching the ball. So when it does arrive you rush the pass or shank the shot and get dropped back down to the reserves. And so the crushing cycle begins again.

Yet for me, Become A Legend is the most exciting thing to happen to the series since the hacked version of PES 3 which had Coldplay's scored one and set up the other. Transfer window looming? Ignore all the offers until they up the wages. Loyalty is for schmucks. (Actually wages seem to have no bearing on the game, and are therefore also broken.) Soon the game becomes all about ball retention, neat passes, finding space. It's like being a real footballer, only without the mobile phone orgies.

The real genius of Become A Legend – and it really is a special kind of idiot genius – is the fact it





## "It's like being an actual footballer, only without the mobile phone orgies."

Clocks as the menu music. And you can stop waving your hands around. I know Become A Legend is a shameless steal from FIFA's technically-better-in-almost-every respect Be A Pro mode, but the only respect that matters is that one game is PES and the other is FIFA and this dog is too old to start learning new stepovers.

## Not a team player

So, given all the things wrong with Become A Legend, why do I love it? Because it makes you play the game entirely differently. Perhaps as some kind of satirical critique on the selfishness of the modern footballer, you cease caring about the team's performance and concentrate purely on your own. Beaten 3-2? A brilliant result if you

makes those moments when you actually do something game-changing, be it a slide rule assist, or a scuffed late winner, feel absolutely euphoric. When I scored my first goal (after two seasons I've scored three times, and that's counting the one that was given to Jonathan bloody Woodgate because it brushed his inner thigh) I ran around the room shouting. Tears filled my eyes. Joyous swear words filled my mouth. It was the best PES goal I've ever scored - not aesthetically, it was scuffed in from the six-yard box - but because the sheer relief after so much tedium, so much hapless calling for the ball only to be ignored, was overwhelming. Become A Legend is the Showgirls of videogame modes: it's so wrong it ends up being massively right.

## MY GUILTY PLEASURE



Paul Fitzpatrick just can't bring himself to run away from **Monster Hunter** 

There is something about Monster Hunter's jarring juxtaposition of horrific, limb-rending dinosaur violence and gentle domestic chores that exerts a tractor beam-like pull on me. Sure, the guy in the tavern with the eye patch may solemnly call it a 'quest', but as far as I'm concerned, heading out to pick up meat, vegetables and essentials is little more than 'doing the weekly shop', even if you do risk getting your throat torn out by the meat course. Yet, with those sun-kissed. rolling hills beckoning, and ample opportunity to whip out the T-Rex rotisserie along the way, it's a risk I'm always very happy to take. Want me to get you anything while I'm out?







### Minoru 3D Webcam

The twin lenses take images in stereo, which means you can take stills and video in 3D.

Yes: 3-bloody-D! Trust us, you'll be the talk of the

## £65

### **Motorola Aura**

screen. Perfect for calling the vailiffs and begging them not to take the Christmas tree. £1,285 motorola.com



# Want

Lust-have kit for PlayStation people

## **Terry Turtle**

Everyone loves a plastic turtle with tourettes, right? Terry will spout 25 potty-mouthed outbursts as you tickle his motion sensor. Britney wouldn't raise her kids without one.

£18

031





## Angel And Devil Headphones

Either a way to honour the eternal, dichotomous struggle between good and evil, or just a chance to impress kooky girls with your cutsie cans. £8

## Drum Rocker Kit

Blow the redundancy money on a Rock Band-compatible premium kit. That will show hem exactly how seriously yo take hitting things with sticks 6230 drumrocker.com



Prices and availability of products are all correct at time of going to press



## Sony Gigajuke NAS-SC55PKE

Facing the music has never been so easy



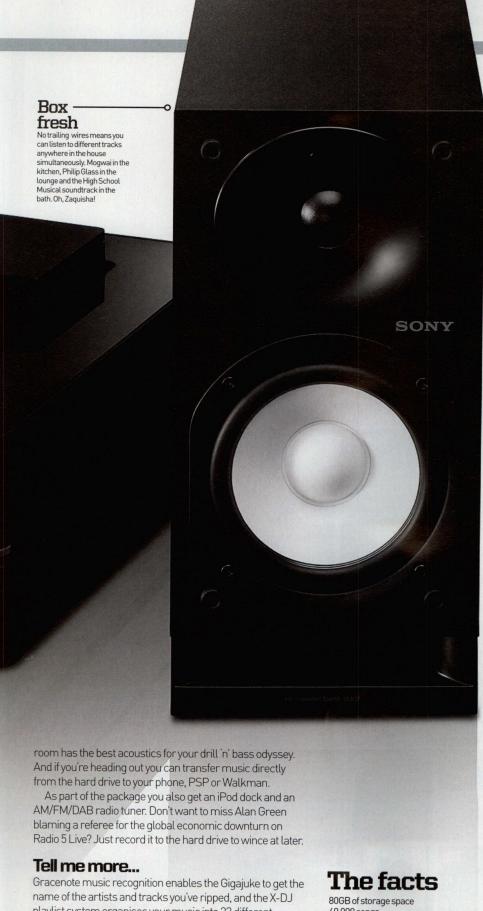
£750 sonystyle.co.uk

In a nutshell

The only people who still buy hi-fi separates are men in wire-rimmed glasses who smell of rolling tobacco. The music of the future (*really* bleepy?) will be played by Sony's Gigajuke – a slab of sound that holds up to 40,000 songs on its hard drive. And lest you think it's a glorified iPod dock, this obsidian monolith can also handle music-making in multiple rooms.

## What's so special?

You can rip songs straight from your CDs to the Gigajuke's hard drive at super speeds – a one-hour CD takes just four minutes. Once your music is stored you stream the tunes from the hard drive, via the speaker station, to the wireless speakers. You can even play different tracks from the hard drive simultaneously in different rooms. That means no more messy wires and no more arguments over which



Gracenote music recognition enables the Gigajuke to get the name of the artists and tracks you've ripped, and the X-DJ playlist system organises your music into 23 different moods, such as the 'party time' setting, for when you want the room filled with high-energy dance tunes, and 'relaxed' for the bitter morning after recriminations. "I saw you in the kitchen with him... I saw you."

80GB of storage space 40,000 songs Wireless speakers 32bit S-MASTER digital amplifier 4.3" colour display X-DJ Playlist creator Gracenote music recognition

## PLAYSTATION TOP 10 CHARTS

This month's heroes and zeroes

**▲**Up **▼** Down **●** Non mover **+** New entry

## PS3

- 1 Call Of Duty World At War
- 2 🛊 Resistance 2
- 3 V Need For Speed Undercover
- 4 V FIFA 09
- 5 V Tomb Raider Underworld
- **5** V LittleBigPlanet
- 7 V PES 2009
- 8 W Motorstorm Pacific Rift
- 9 A Fallout3
- Midnight Club Los Angeles

Source chart-track.co.uk

## PS2

- 1 FIFA 09
- Need For Speed Undercover
- 3 V Call Of Duty World At War
- 4 WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2009
- 5 🔺 Quantum Of Solace
- Guitar Hero World Tour
- 7 A Star Wars TFU
- 8 Lego Indiana Jones
- 9 🛦 Legend Of Spyro DOTD
- 10 Crash Mind Over Mutant

Source chart-track.co.uk

## **PSP**

- 1 FIFA 09
- 2 PES 2009
- 3 A Need For Speed Undercover
- **4** ▼ Football Manager 2009
- 5 V Lego Batman
- 6 WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2009
- 7 Midnight Club LA Remix
- 8 A Star Wars TFU
- 9 V Lego Indiana Jones
- **10** A Wall-E

Source chart-track.co.uk

## The PlayStation entertainment plan

Never spend a moment unfulfilled with our monthly guide

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

25

01

Friday

Saturday

Sunday



Happy Christmas

Begin weaning yourself off Turkey byproducts by heading by entering our competition and winning an HDTV? Baz Luhrmann's new



Newcastle welcome title challengers
Liverpool to St James Park, live on Sky Sports 1 and HD. Kick-off is at 12pm.







It's a chance to start afresh and make some resolutions. Top of our list? Not getting our faces eaten off in



12



January sșue 2,8 on sale. Subscribe now on page 36.

TNA Wrestling brings violence, body blows NIA in Birmingham





Relying on the old comedy formula that inept men plus kids equals hilarity, Role

Models hits cinemas

New York Giants would put them one







## Win the war, and a TV, with Call Of Duty

## Get a PS3 an HDTV and eight games!

It's Christmas, and with the help of the elves at Activision we've got our best ever prize to give away. Namely a Samsung 37" LCD TV, a PS3 and eight, yes eight, games. There's Call Of Duty: World At War, Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows. Fracture, 007: Quantum Of Solace, Rapala Fishing Frenzy, Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon. Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa and Star Wars: The Force Unleashed. To be in with a chance of winning answer the following question correctly.

Who's the developer of Call Of Duty: World At War on PS3?

ATREYARCH BINFINITY WARD C NAUGHTY DOG

Text using the word 'COD' followed by a space, then your answer A, B or C followed by a space, then your name or address to 87474. Or enter at futurecomps.co.uk/27cod. Winners will be picked at random from all correct entries. Closing date: 20 January 2009

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Games to play when the boss isn't looking



#### Isn't It Fun To Throw **Ancient Stuff**

Turns out it really is. Play priceless artefacts at waves gassing them with farts

snipurl.com/57dlh



### Flight Of The **Hamsters**

revenge for the cage cleaning and vicious, hamsters into the sky.

snipurl.com/57ddx



#### Super **Obama World**

only way to properly

superobamaworld.com



## VE YEARS

This month we visit OPS2 #42

The Getaway 2. That'd be a little from

sequel Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow, Sony's secret (and This Is Football 2004 better than FIFA and PES, and the new, thoroughly become Fight Night 2004.

development team behind James **Bond 007: Everything Or Nothing** SingStar, long-awaited (hey, what's new?) sequel Gran Turismo 4 and technofear shooter Cold Winter.

was Rockstar's tabloid-baiting (but genuinely ace) Manhunt, which scored

Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines, Battlestar Galactica and Grooverider: Slot Car Racing duking it out for worst



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Unplugged iPod dock\*

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## Intempo Infusion Dock

With DAB and FM radio, the Infusion is an iPod dock of the highest order. Its five watt speakers and menacing bass You can get your hands on one from Amazon or

To celebrate the launch of the new Infusion dock and DAB radio, our pals over at Intempo have sent us 100 of their IDS01 Unplugged iPod docks (pictured above) to give away. They're cool, sleek and one could be yours when you subscribe to Official PlayStation Magazine!

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# 38 OVERLORD II

It's like project management on Team Satan as you take control of a swarm of demonic minions and lay waste to the Roman Empire.

# PlayStation Official Magazine - UK TOTAL ETITS

Latest info on Planet PlayStation's hottest games

et's just pretend that we're like the minions from Overlord II and you're our ruthless master. You demand a constant supply of gaming treats and treasures and we're only too eager to please, scurrying off to find them.

Two of the biggest gems we lay at your feet this month are Street Fighter IV (p42) and Killzone 2 (p46). SFIV has reignited age-old debates about who has the best skills with which character. "You can't defeat my Chunners!" one minute, "My Ryu's unstoppable" the next. It's like Orpington College 1991 all over again.

Killzone 2, on the other hand, has everyone united: there's nothing more handsome on PS3 – it makes real life look dull by comparison. Fortunately, it's got the ballistic punch to back up all that pretty, which means it's shaping up to be the shooter of next year.

Lastly there's Tom Clancy's Hawx (p48) which is like Ghost Recon with afterburners. Jets, missiles and bogeys – it's Top Gun 2009. Bagsy not Goose!



STREET FIGHTER IV
Stop looking up her skirt – she'll punch
your face off if she catches you. Find out
why we're punch-drunk in love with
Capcom's reborn brawler.



EMPIRES
The men might wear prettier dresses than the girls, but that's okay when they can decimate entire armies with a frilly twirl.



UFC 2009 UNDISPUTED Smackdown is for babies. This is a real fighting game. The only hard and fast rule is: don't kill your opponent. Well, try not to kill him. Okay, just don't let the ref see...





038

Overlord: Raising Hell



reedom Fighters

brave resistance boys round as the comm vade New York City

# 

elcome to the fantasy game for people who hate elves. It might be set in a magical land, but here the gnomes are suicide bombers, the pointy eared folk are whiny environmentalists and the fairy

queen dumps her royal duties to be

your girlfriend.

The original game, Overlord: Raising Hell, was largely overlooked. What you missed out on was the chance to be the bad guy, conquering the land by ordering your minions to do all the hard work - think Pikmin, only with fugly goblins. It was basically a Tolkien

parody, but this sequel, which uses the same innovative mechanic, has more universal references. Most obvious is the Empire, a Roman-esque culture that has taken over the world, ridding it of magical creatures and filling it with fancy architecture, senators and centurions. Then there's Florian the whinging Greenpeace elf, with his blonde dreadlocks and his band of hippies. He's trying to collect all the persecuted magical creatures and take them to sanctuaries... sanctuaries that you discover and decimate. It's the Overlord way. Among the other

enemies you'll have to face are vicious pandas and the Eradicators, Empire troops who use a giant vacuum cleaner to suck up mystical creatures.

This time out you play as the original Overlord's heir, who's been raised by minions to be their new master. You're free to cast spells and use your massive sword to smite everything in range, but the idea is to get your minions to do it for you. There are four types, each with their own skill: the battle-hardened browns, the firethrowing reds, the stealthy greens and the healing blues. All you have

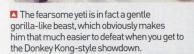


to do is direct them to solve puzzles, overpower your enemies and, erm, club baby seals to death. **Riding school** 

Your minions' abilities have evolved, which should make for more varied quests and richer puzzles. They've now got mounts to ride into battle – we saw the red's fire salamanders, the brown's wolves and the green's spiders in action. The secret to taming these mounts is a boss fight – for the spiders there's a battle with their leggy mother. It wasn't about simple hack and slash attacks, but tactically using your force of 15 underlings. Using a mix of poison and pressure pads the mother spider was knocked off a









# "The two styles of evil have direct and definite consequences..."

wall onto her back, where her vulnerable white belly was exposed. Once she was dead all the greens had to do was hop on their new creepy chums and they could skitter across walls – the perfect complement to the green's stealthy skills. In the offices of developer Triumph, they're known as Metal Gear minions, and there are plenty of assassination missions where using them will be essential.

As well as mounts the minions can

use things like catapults, ships and disguises. And the new possession spell means that the Overlord can also inhabit a minion's body, enabling you to control them directly and see through their eyes. Triumph is still debating whether or not it can get away with the minions shouting, "Enter me master." We tried it out, dressing our minions in legionnaires' outfits, then possessing them and leading them to a catapult behind enemy lines. Controlling the

minions was as simple pointing at where we wanted them to go, though the camera system needs a little work.

One of the problems with the original was that the consequences of your choices, whether to smite the peasants or save them, weren't really

# 5 big questions Essential info for minion management

# Where do they live?

There are different domains to explore, like the snowy town of Nordberg, jungles, countryside and the scarred Wastelands.

# How do they fight?

Simply direct your minions to a target. Their tactics range from throwing fireballs to stabbing victims in the back.

# How do I give them orders?

You don't have to send your minions off in bulk – you can instruct specific types to utilise their individual skills.

# Is there multiplayer?

You can play splitscreen games where you get to compete for the prize of 'most dastardly Overlord'

# What happens when they die?

The priest minion can bring back your favourite followers, complete with any special items they were carrying.





obvious enough, and you could make it through the entire game without being too much of a bastard. Not any more. Here there are two styles of evil – domination and destruction – and they have direct and definite consequences on the way your character develops.

# Bad to the bone

If you're a power crazy control freak (honestly, who isn't?) then domination is for you. Instead of killing peasants you can enslave them, building your power slowly as they work to provide you with vital resources like life force, essential for creating new minions. Destruction is more of a scorched

Earth policy. It's all killing, all the time. You get an instant hit of bonuses, but not the long-term benefits. Deciding which path to take will now directly affect your Overlord's appearance and the spell system.

Every spell has two effects, depending on how long you charge it. For instance, use Evil Presence and a quick tap will send out a lightning hand to subdue and enslave enemies; hold it down, though, and your victims disintegrate. As you play, the game remembers your preferences and adapts to them, so it becomes harder to change your ways. If you favour destruction it will take less and less

pressure on the button to kill a target.

From the new, reactive spell system to combat that's been tweaked for smoother, sexier slaying, Triumph is really running with the original idea. This is a more ambitious world with bigger battles - some scenes will have 50 minions facing 200 Empire troops. On top of that the things that made the original such a rough diamond - simple minion controls, Rhianna Pratchett's mischievous script - have survived intact. So with any luck this time it will get the attention it deserves. After all, everyone knows that the girls like a bad boy. And that's why we're still wearing this leather jacket.





"I hope no one is going to complain that you can't be evil enough this time. If they do, they're clearly not trying hard enough!" Rhianna Pratchett Writer and narrative designer, Overlord II



△ Focus ○ Attacks ⊗ Revenge □ Gauge

irst law of SFIV: master the focus attack. Because however well you know the returning characters here – if you played SFII back in the day you'll immediately be firing off Yoga Flames, Sonic Booms and Claw Dives on instinct alone – you'll get smashed quick if you don't learn the new stuff.

Focus attacks are moves that shield you from a single hit while you charge them (done by holding mid-punch and mid-kick). So say you're Guile, and Ryu slings a fireball from close range while you're charging a focus attack – it will hit you but inflict no damage, and you can then nail him with your focus attack (in Guile's case, a quick, hard chop to the

chest) by releasing the buttons while Ryu is in the fireball recovery animation. But be warned: some moves, like Sagat's Tiger Knee, can break this one-hit shield.

Charge for longer and you'll see a white flash that means your attack is strong enough to make your opponent crumple when hit, opening them up to further damage. Fully charge your attack and it becomes unblockable, enabling you to chain together a series of moves.

# Revenge is sweet

While mastering focus attacks, you'll also want to keep an eye on the circular meter in the bottom corner. This is the revenge gauge, and it means that even if you take

the beating of your life, you always have a shot at pulling yourself back into the fight. As you take damage the meter fills and, once full, you're able to pull off an Ultra - an extended series of OTT moves that are guaranteed to make you look like a genius (when they connect) or a pillock (when you mistime them, or they're blocked). Ken, for instance, chains a Dragon Punch into a series of huge kicks that send his foe into the air, then nails a Flaming Dragon Punch on their way down for good measure. (This is all done by pressing \$\square\$\rightarrow\square\rightarrow\righ any new feature that makes Ken look cool after years of utter lameness has to be a winner. (We're all Ryu men, here.)







# **Could Be A Contender**

C&C: Red Alert 3



This one sounds like it's going to be a winner

# The premise

In a parallel universe Albert Einstein uses time travel to kill Hitler and accidentally starts WW3 in the future.

# The reality

It's an RTS so you'll be organising massive battles by issuing orders and managing resources.

### The hook

It doesn't take itself seriously: time travelling tanks, armoured attack bears, psychic Japanese school girls... and Gemma Atkinson.

# The inspiration

The original Command & Conquer, in which the good GDI took on eco-terrorists
The Brotherhood Of Nod.

# The chances

RTS games are usually borked by using a pad instead of a mouse so it all depends on the control scheme.

Format PS3 ETA 2009 Pub EA Dev EA Los Angeles



Source Amazon.co.uk

# Pre-Orders The punters' top three



# Street Fighter IV

The quast-3D visuals, outrageously amped-up moves and plumproster of fighters—old and new—mean this is a major return to form for the classic series Keep the faith: it's going to be massive.

Format PS 3ETA 20 Feb Pub Capcom



### Killzone 2

Ridthe galaxy of the super fugly Helghast then work your way up the ranks in a 32-player online game that features customisable classes. It's set to be PS3's premier sci-fiFPS. FormatPS3ETA 20Feb PubSony



Silent Hill Homecoming

The survival horror series makes its PS3 debut with new hero, ex-soldier Alex. Prepare for more creepy kids and the gentle cares of a zombie dog's jaws. Format PS3 ETA Feb 2009 Pub Konami



Classic Series Format PS3 ETA 2009 Pub Koei Dev Omega Force

asty Warriors 6



# Sima Yi

"Hello gorgeous, what's your na... Oh, sorry sir." Gender issues aside, Sima Yi is a devious and cunning strategist whose main rival in Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires is the tactical master, Zhuge Liang.



Zhen Ji **Dynasty** We apon Allure Chain Whip Wife of Cao Pi (son of Cao Cao), Zhen Ji is your archetypal ice maiden: beautiful, cold-hearted and impossibly high maintenance. So out of our league.



# **Dynasty** Shu Weapon Strength And Virtue Swords Liu is described as 'a man

of utmost virtue', which we take to mean he's a bit of a sanctimonious priss. His ambition is to bring peace to the land for his people, apparently by killing everyone else in China



# Lu Bu

Weapon Maelstrom Rocking this season's 'madman' look, Lu is rarely seen in battle without his snorting nag Red Hare, and wields a huge glaive for 360° of lethality. He's out to prove his power is limitless and it may not be an idle boast



## Zhang Fei

Dynasty Shu Weapon Serpent Blade Hard-drinking Zhang Fei is said to have the strength of 10,000 men, which. incidentally, is the number of generic foot soldiers you have to knack in the average Dynasty Warriors level. Certainly feels that way



### ■ Dong Zhuo

Dynasty Independent Weapon Wizard Club Slave to a terrible greed for power and (from the looks of things) pork buns, Dong wants to create his idea of paradise or Earth. Favourite diversion in battle? Asking opponents to see what's under the dragon's tongue'.

Zhao Yun Dynasty Shu Weapon Dragon Spike One of Liu Bei's lieutenants,

Zhao Yun is super brave for a massive show-off) and often storms enemy lines alone. He once saved Liu Bei's sor - a feat that earned him the name 'Little Dragon'



# Cao Cao

**Dynasty** Wei Weapon Sword Of Heaven Lurking under his sullen exterior, the King of Wei Cao is a keen gardener. Sorry, that should have read despotic ruler whose terrified officers will do anything, however cruel, to secure victory over all China for him'.

# The hook It's hack 'n' slash meets Risk

Empires integrates a tactical element with DW's buttonmashing combat. Having chosen a dynasty, territory, and officers, the slashing becomes a means to seize land and expand your empire. New for DW6E are strategic character cards that can be played to influence battle, Subordinate, Officer and Lord ranks and surprise attacks



Pick a battlefield to expand your empire.



Slay hordes of enemies to win the territory.



Fight off the bosses who challenge your rule.







The hero Thomas Sevchenko the key man in Alpha Squad and all-round



The veteran Rico Velasquez



The boss Jan Templar The hero from the original game, Templar is Alpha Squad's off-field commander.

△ Good ○ Looks ⊗ Big □ Guns

f Killzone was a man, it would be a handsome murderer - smart hair, shiny teeth, long overcoat concealing not a knife or a gun, but a lead pipe. THUMP. That's how he'd do his business. Because Killzone is brilliantly, outrageously good-looking, but also subtle like a brick to the back of the head. And we're beginning to think that's no bad thing.

The sweet truth is that Killzone 2 is shaping up to be the most visually sophisticated thing on PS3, with its deft mix of motion blur, fizzing lighting and complicated post-processing effects that we can't pretend to truly understand, combining to make a grim but gorgeous shadowplay of the game's bold, chunky character models. Which, by the way, are pitched spot on, not as preposterously pumped-up as Gears Of War's He-Man meatheads, but pleasingly solid and round lumps of soldier.

Still, at first that seemed like it might be a problem - the whole thing threatened to be too weighty. Our sense from earlier previews was that we wanted it to move faster, for the bulky Helghast space fascists to get dead quicker and to fall down with fewer bullets. Now we've played guite a bit further (through four levels we're allowed to talk about, and two that we're not) and we've acclimatised.

# **Girth mother**

The trick is to embrace the big-fisted physicality. You're driving a tank here (sometimes literally), not a sports car - get used to moving slower and taking more damage. The game isn't about running and gunning, it's about slamming into cover and fighting splattering mini-wars of attrition with dug-in enemies. The ruined concrete scenery offers tons of variations on the theme - two sides of a semi-collapsed

courtyard erupting with machine gun fire, volleys of bullets from opposing sides of a crumbling street. There are big set-pieces, too - bringing down a lightning-belching arc tower, defending Visari Square from swarms of troopers spilling from the surrounding tower blocks - and they come off spectacularly, but the nuts and bolts is built on heavy armour and even heavier bullets.

There are still a couple of niggles. Aside from the M82 assault rifle all the weapons have First World War-era iron sights rather than sexy laser dot this is the future, people! - and a headshot should always mean instant death, rather than your stormtrooper helmet simply popping off to reveal your bleached bald skull. But for the main part we're convinced this has plenty of substance to go with its astonishing looks - find out for sure next month in our exclusive review.





# Can't Wait To Play...



Industry
insiders
reveal their
PS3 faves
Ben Mattes
Producer, Prince Of Persia

# **Resident Evil 5**



"Resi 4 set the bar very high for 'redefining themselves'. The enhanced controls will definitely improve the experience and with the new co-op mode I'll be able to share the thrill of the nonstop survival action with a friend and probably be scared to death all over again."

# **Uncharted 2**

"This is high on my wish list.
Uncharted was a perfect
example of a game that I felt
was so much more than the
sum of its parts. It defined the
next generation, not just
because of beautiful graphics
or gameplay, but because
every element of the game
was refined, from animation,
to acting, to music, to story."

# **Mirror's Edge**

"As you may be able to tell from Prince Of Persia, we like taking risks on our team, so we feel a sort of kinsmanship with the folks at DICE for the extremely gutsy move they're making with this. Mirror's Edge's fluid movement gives it a unique gameplay mechanic."

**Preview** 

A Mig-29 Fulcrum is good for close combat. The Soviet designed SU-27 Flanker.





The ERS will alert you to enemy lock-ons.



Hold when firing for a missile's-eye view.



Dodge attacks with stylish acrobatics.



Every plane is obsessively realistic...



...but their weaponry has been increased. Most jets carry three types of missile.





The F16, also know as the Fighting Falcon. Direct your wingmen with the D-pad.





The £69m Eurofighter Typhoon.







 $Move the camera to see who's on your tail. \\ A-10 Thunderbolt-ace for ground attacks. \\ A light attack Harrier GR7 jump jet. \\$ 





# Online dogfights

Play four-man co-op or skirmish in eight-man deathmatches, with access to support units such as radar jammers.

# I-spy

High quality satellite images add a photorealistic look to the ground as you're crashing towards it.

# Old friends

Scott Mitchell from Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter has a cameo.

# Can't Play these

The Next... Ace Combat Format PS3 ETA January Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft Romania

# m Clancy's HAWX

 $\triangle$  Wing  $\bigcirc$  And  $\otimes$  A  $\bigcirc$  Prayer

laying Tom Clancy's Hawx is the closest you're going to get to actually being inside a Eurofighter Typhoon without scouring adultfriendfinder.com for lonely RAF pilots. Set in a recognisable 2015, you start as a pilot for a private military company called Artemis, but end up fighting against them when they attack the USA. Cue the blue skies and precision bombs as you take on missions ranging from simple escorts to sneak attacks.

It's billed as a flight sim, but our first time in the Typhoon proved it was light on the technical stuff and heavy on the fist-pumping. In our first mission, codenamed Adder, we had to protect an oil refinery in the desert. Sounds simple, but it was

intense and frantic, with attack helicopters above, tanks on the ground and commanders roaring orders into the cockpit. On top of that we had to learn to manoeuvre our craft, which at first felt like trying to wrestle a greasy kestrel. More than once gravity defeated us before the enemy even had a look in. And that was just the tutorial.

Another mission involved trying to defend Washington DC, taking out enemy planes with our missiles and directing our wingmen to attack bogeys or watch our tails, all while keeping one eye on Air Force One. Combat isn't the only answer though - sometimes your only choice is to go in softly. In the fiercely unforgiving Stiletto mission we had to eliminate enemy radar beacons but soon

learned that instead of going in with heavy firepower, we had to perform fancy flying to dodge detection.

# Top guns

There are 50 different planes available, from the F-22 Raptor to the Rafale C, but what matters is they're all loaded with missiles, cannons and noob-proof gadgets. The Enhanced Reality System (ERS) gives you anti-crash systems, battle information and a tactical map so you can get an instant overview of the whole battlefield. It's the difference between impressing the girls with your aerial acrobatics and making a really expensive crater. It doesn't make life too easy, but it does make it more fun. Hawx is out early next year. Pack a parachute.



Classic Series Format PS3 ETA 9 February Pub Capcom Dev Grin

# **Bionic Commando**

△ You ○ And ⊗ Whose □ Arm?

Initially, playing this merely underlines just how cleverly Mirror's Edge implements its unique take on skyscraper hopscotch. Unlike that game's clear, unobtrusive signposting, Bionic Commando's nuked metropolis feels both visually fussy and overly linear, with fatal pockets of radiation cruelly restricting hero Nathan Spencer's Spider-Manlike swinging to thin canyons of mission relevance. Having resurrected an arcade icon, it feels like Capcom has baulked at the unfettered freedom Spencer's Swiss Army limb potentially gives him to explore the impressivelooking wasteland.

It's a pity because once you begin to trust the arm's grappling hook as you plummet, and take ever greater leaps of faith, you can begin to see how exhilarating chaining those swooping arcs together can be.

# Out on a limb

In theory it's as simple as pressing & to leap, identifying a grapple point your crosshairs glow blue if you're good to go - and holding 12 to attach and swing. To propel Spencer forward, a prompt flashes up as you reach the optimal point of the swing, whereupon you release 12 and repeat the process. Alternatively, you can grapple a wall and scale it by holding 12 and hoisting Spencer up with **3**. It's an effective system but takes some getting used to. A fact that makes the developer's decision to deny you the freedom to simply explore the city and your new-found powers at your leisure all the more baffling.



"People say they want originality, but what they really what is what they're used to, with a little sprinkle of originality on top. 'Cause we like what we're comfortable with."

Ben Judd



# Gut Reaction

What's strong and what's wrong

# ▲ New Year, new games

Uncharted 2, Resi 5, Heavy Rain, inFamous... and of course whatever Team Ico comes up with next. Shame we'll all be stony broke.

# ▲ Oh, *now* you like it

Killzone Beta gets underway. Internet collectively notices it's a bit good. OPM nods paternally.

# ▲ Fight > work

Mag almost collapses as Street Fighter IV and Turbo HD arrive in the space of a week. "Yes, that page will write itself. Ryu says so..."

# **▼** Dead dog

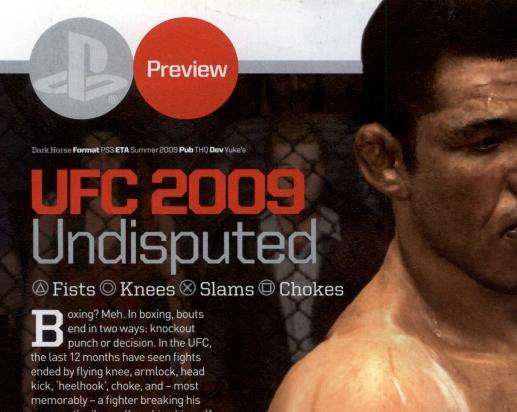
"Ooh, he's so cute, can I stroke... Nope, too late, he's dead."
As sidekicks go, we can only hope that
Resi 5's Sheva proves less suicidal than
Fallout 3's Dogmeat.

# **▼** Left behind

Okay Valve, we get it: you hate us. It's the only sane reason that you'd refuse to do a PS3 version of Left 4 Dead. Fine, but you just missed out on a Christmas card.

## **▼** Your free time

Careers, love lives and basic hygiene sacrificed to the tottering pile of games that stupid Santa has delivered.



opponent's ribs and knocking himself spark out during a slam.

This is both good and bad for the UFC game. Good because it's the most unpredictable competition in the world: anything can happen. Bad for the same reason. How are you going to translate that onto two sticks and a dozen buttons? "It's a challenge," admits producer William Schmitt. "Grappling presents unique problems." Many of the developers have taken up Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, a martial art practised by all UFC fighters, in order to better understand the sport's intricacies. And it shows: not only are the fighters' entrances and idiosyncrasies right, but the striking, submissions and reversals all flow together smoothly. How it'll play is still anyone's guess only UFC president Dana White and Yuke's themselves have held the controllers so far - but if they get the double-knockout slam in there we'll give it bonus marks.

nce gloves mean KOs are frequent. In e, they'll be determined by whether

# Heavy hitters How the UFC comes to life on PS3







Heavyweight contenders like Quinton 'Rampage' Jackson and Frank Mir are confirmed.

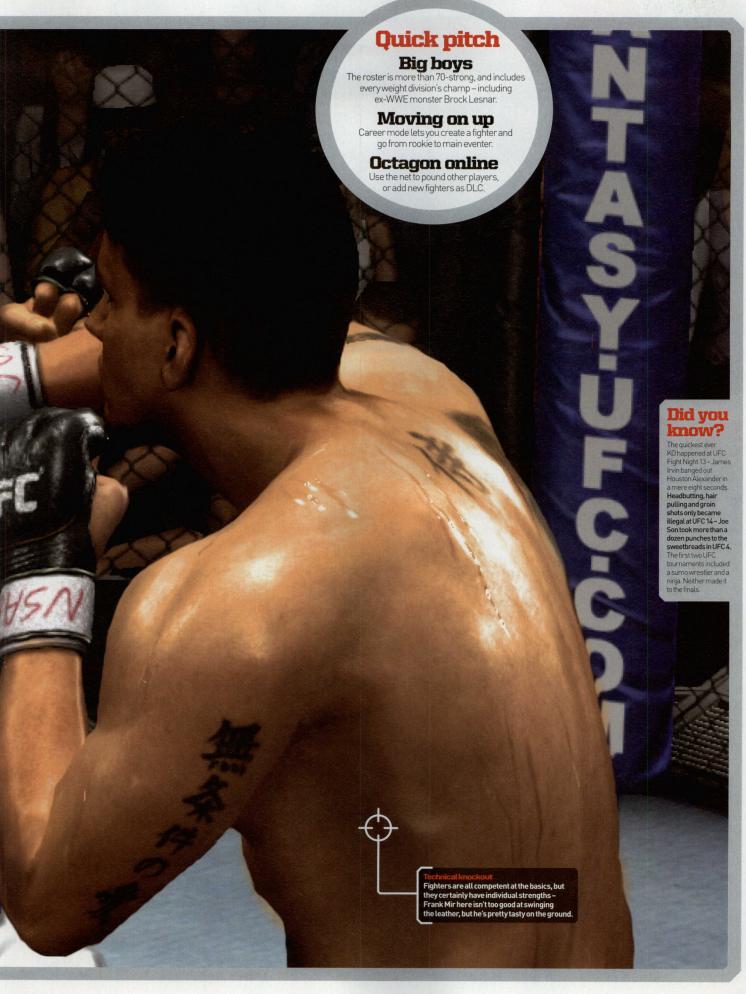


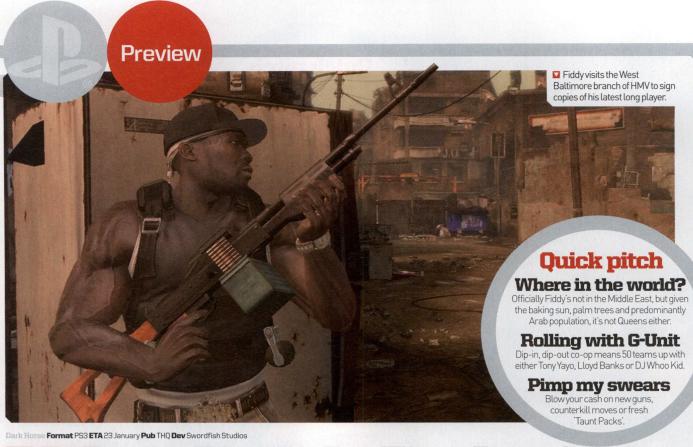






There's also plenty of detail in the non-combatants - revered cutman Jacob 'Stitch' Duran appears alongside professional Octagon-pixie Arianny Celeste.





# 50 Cent Blood On The Sand

aze, Legendary, Turok,
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty,
Quantum Of Solace, Army Of
Two, Conflict: Denied Ops – there's no
shortage of wantonly average shooters
out there – and Blood On The Sand is
considerably tighter, pacier and
enjoyable than the lot of them. Hey,
nobody's more surprised than us...

# 'G' Three Kings

Key to this implausible, End Days scenario is Swordfish Studios' decision to embrace the madness of the 'Fiddy hits the Middle East' premise and sprint with it into an world of quasigenius wrongness and surprisingly solid, duck and cover combat. So the story is barking – organ harvesting! 50 out to recover a diamondencrusted skull! Tony Yayo knowing the intricacies of military-grade ordnance! – the national and cultural stereotypes positively 1970s in their lack of subtlety, and the dialogue several clicks north of 'salty'.

However, stop

spluttering at the shamelessness of it all – dodge the suicide bombers in their pickups, Fiddy! – and what you find is a breathlessly energetic shooter that never leaves you a moment to question whether you should be having this much fun. The co-op dynamic (online or Al) works well, there are counterkills, crates bursting with cash, hidden goodies, tons of slick bonus tasks and 19 original tracks from Curtis himself. So

wrong it's right? Could be.

# Star talk



"I had just watched the movie Blood Diamond and I was like, 'Yo, I want it to feel like this'." 50 Cent Hiphop artist

# Counterkills Get rich or die tryin' with Fiddy's melee special moves







Get 50 up close to an enemy and you can press ( to trigger a button-matching hand-to-hand takedown.









While you can't choose a specific counterkill to unleash it is possible to buy ever more complex and punishing finishers from the shop. Current favourite? The Power Of The Tang Hand.

# The Latest On...

New shots, new games, new info



# The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest

Format PS3 ETA 16 January Pub EA Our first play of Pandemic's Ringsmeets-Battlefront slasher reveals a lack of spark, with the pretty movie sequences dissolving into sluggish, thumb-numbing waves of butchery.



# Sega Mega Drive **Ultimate Collection**

Format PS3 ETA Spring Pub Sega 40 old-skoolers from the early '90s. Most will be burn, but the fact it includes the mighty Streets Of Rage 1, 2, and 3 has us medium interested... For now.



# Wanted: Weapons Of Fate

Format PS3 ETA March Pub Warner Bros It's a guasi-seguel to the movie, with an authentically-modelled James McAvoy (steady, ladies) bending bullets using an interesting but fiddly analogue stick system. Fun from what we've played so far, but for how long?



# **Burnout Paradise**

Format PS3 ETA Spring Pub EA DLC planned for 2009 includes toy cars, a 'boosts special pack' featuring the Carson Extreme Hotrod - the series' fastest ever car - and a huge, entirely new (paid for) island called Big Surf.



### Wheelman

Format PS3 ETA 20 February Pub Midway Steals from Stranglehold (shooting) and Burnout (vehicle physics) and while that marriage may sound weird, it just about works. The surprisingly cool bit: making Vin Diesel leap from one car to another while driving with a tap of .



### inFamous

Format PS3 ETA May Pub Sony Game director Nate Fox promises a

completely slowdown-free experience, even in dense gang fights, packed with loads of Trophies - which he describes as "like videogame crack".

# There's more...

that Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 is on the way next year, along with Guitar Hero 5, a James Bond racer described as "Mario Kart meets Forza" (!) and a new Tony Hawk's outing where "you're not going to be playing this game with a controller in your hands". A skateboard peripheral, then. Sounds equal parts exciting and ominous. It's not just **inFamous** getting Trophies - Sony has confirmed that as of 1 January 2009 all PS3 games will have to support them. Polyphony Digital boss Kazunori Yamauchi s that **Gran Turismo** PSP is still in the works and that Gran Turismo 5 is "moving forward". The bad news? Neither is likely to

turn up before Christmas 2009. 505 Games is to publish a super-serious WW2 flight sim entitled **IL-2** Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey, which'll let you fight over Stalingrad, Berlin, Sicily, Korsun, and – Yes! Yes! Yes! in the The Battle Of Britain, Sony has launched a PlayStation credit card in the US that earns reward points to spend on

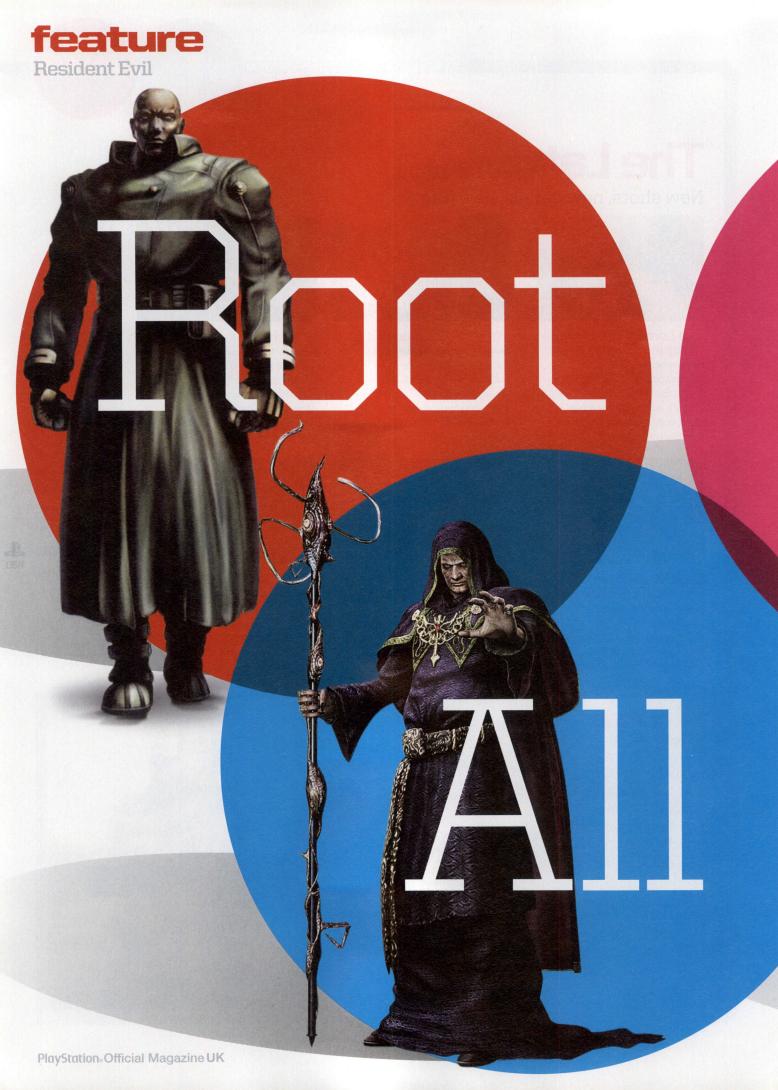
PlayStation and Sony products every time it's used. No word as to if and when it'll come to Europe. Because that's what we need right now. More debt.

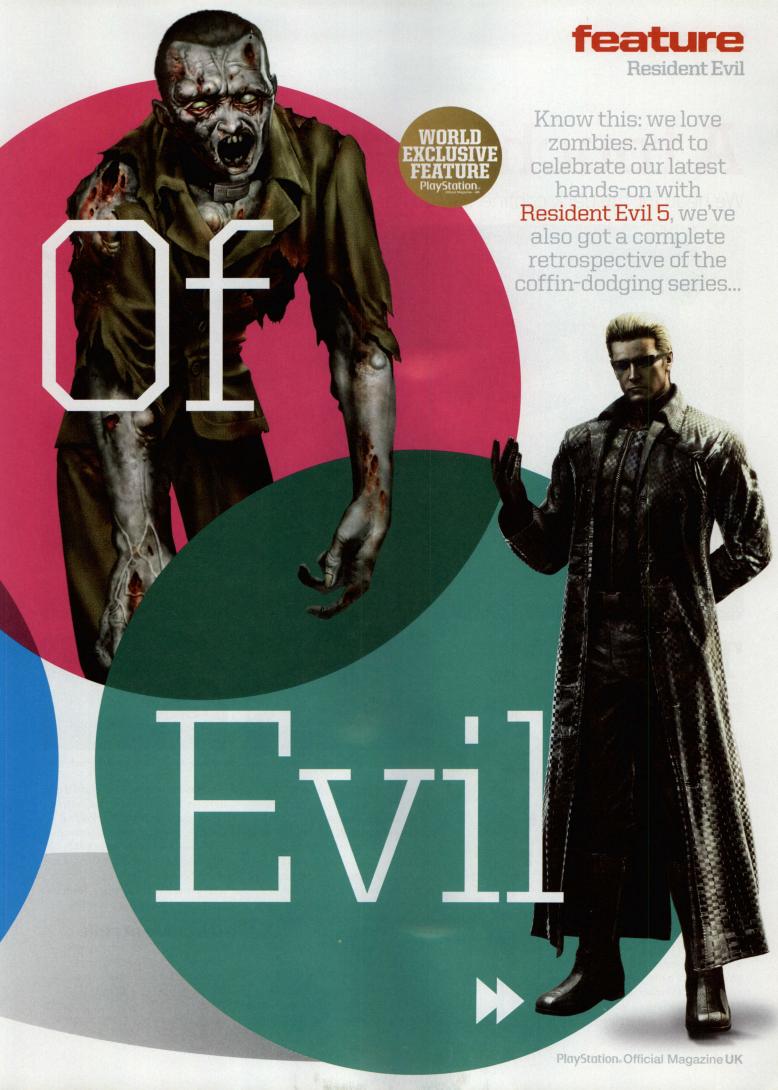
# Watchmen

Format PS3 ETA March Pub Warner Bros

The greatest graphic novel evah is being turned into a movie - and a game. It could be amazing: full of flawed but rounded heroes, the pick of which is Dr Manhattan. He was created in an accident and is now the most powerful superhero of all time imagine splitting yourself into ten flame-chucking soldiers and then frying everyone in sight. The possibilities are endless... as is the scope for crushing disappointment.









# A touch of evil

We head for the dark continent to go hands-on with Resident Evil 5





he first level of Resident Evil 5 I play is called The Gathering Place, and it only takes a couple of minutes before those three words take on a terrible significance. Easing Chris Redfield down into a cramped yard enclosing a shack in the game's fictional African shantytown of Kijuju, I walk him into the ramshackle structure, weapon primed. His partner, the fragrant Sheva Alomar, follows with caution. It's empty, but the sudden cacophony coming from the nearby town square suggests any sense of relief is premature.

Edging towards a dust-rimmed window I look outside to see a raised platform surrounded by baying, enraged locals – the whites of their eyes pooling blood. Their deranged gaze is fixed on a small cluster of figures above them. One – a wiry man in mirrored Aviators – stirs up the crowd using a battered megaphone, and while I can't make out the dialect, it doesn't take a linguist to recognise the scene that's about to play out.









△ Last glimpsed in Resident Evil Code: Veronica X, Albert Wesker returns in full evil mastermind mode.

Before him kneels a man, held in place by two thugs, and begging desperately for his life, while behind him... the form is recognisably human, but the massive proportions of the hooded executioner's body and its mutilation by scores of three-inch nails projecting from his grimy, sweat-slick skin are anything but. Suddenly the ringleader nods, and the executioner raises a massive, chain-wrapped axe, bringing it down to silence the screams with a sickening wet thud.

The crowd roars, and before it even subsides the leader is looking directly at me. A barked command and suddenly the crowd – the whole crowd is sprinting our way. And behind them lumbers the executioner trailing that obscene axe. If I have ever doubted Capcom's wisdom in hardwiring cooperative play into Resident Evil 5, it evaporates in that instant. Guns at the ready, Sheva and I take up positions as the first window shatters. Man, it's good to be back popping heads.

# The cradle of strife

How do you follow a survival horror reinvention whose flawless design, pacing and gameplay made it arguably the best game of any genre on PlayStation 2? Here, at last, is Capcom's pragmatic answer to the challenge

# feature

Resident Evil



posed by Resident Evil 4. You resist the urge to repeat that game's seismic gameplay shift – Resi 4 traded the series shuffling zombies, scarce ammo and vulnerable, drip-fed scares for more mobile 28 Days Later-style infected maniacs, a lot of ammo and quick-time event terror. Instead, you refine the gameplay and transpose it to a new location with even fewer places to hide, ramping up the breathless urgency with drop-in drop-out co-op play forcing you to protect as well as survive. And you

# **Environment**

This time around your surroundings have more points of interaction, such as powerlines that can be cut to electrocute the Infected. Oh, and check out the faded Umbrella logo on the bottom shack. It'll pay to keep your eyes open at all times...

# Shooter controls

As well as the classic Resi 4 controls, the new game enables you to opt for a two-stick FPS-style setup.



# "You're now forced to protect as well as survive."

create a story that simultaneously links new Resi with the contemporary fear of terrorism, and the very core of the series – the discovery of the Progenitor Virus, from which every last Resi mutation has

writhed and erupted into life.
Naturally, Resi 5's plot is
a closely guarded secret
but this much we know:
Chris Redfield, former
Special Tactics And
Rescue Service (STARS)
officer in the first game
is now a member of the
Bioterrorism Security
Assessment Alliance,
deployed in West Africa
alongside local BSAA agen

alongside local BSAA agent Sheva to investigate a possible (read: definite) biohazard outbreak. It seems that with the collapse of Umbrella the corporation responsible for the Progenitor Virus and its mutating, zombifying T-Virus spin-off - terrorists worldwide have started acquiring Bio-Organic Weapons (BOWs). Kijuju appears to be a flashpoint for the outbreak that, like the Plagas from Resi 4, takes the form of a parasitic organism that inhabits the host, leaving them murderously psychotic. Behind it all is a new pharmaceutical corporation called Tricell, run by

# **Inventory**

The inventory no longer opens in the pause menu, meaning there's no respite from attack while you hunt for herbs or ammo. You can also request items from your partner.



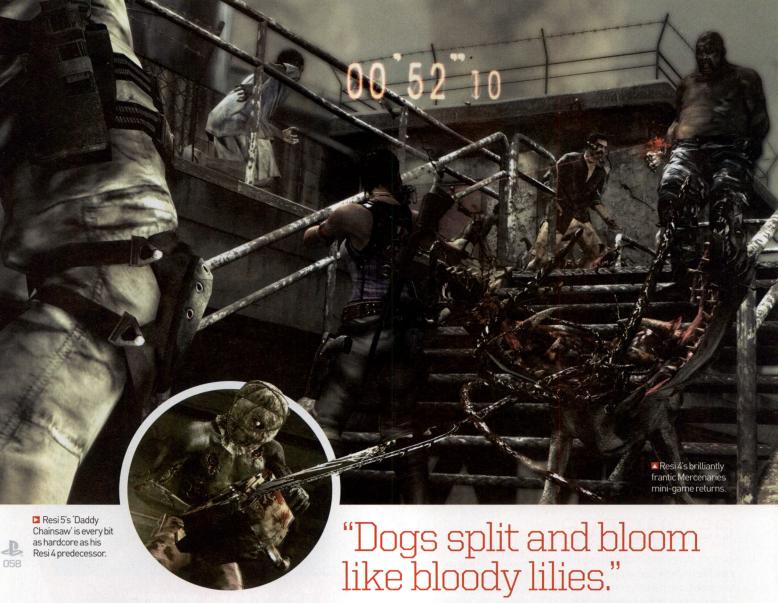
Five new features in Resident Evil 5



### Melee attacks

Hand-to-hand combat is a much more important feature in Resi 5, and is essential to take down certain enemies.





haughty newcomer, Excella Gionne, who in turn is collaborating with ultimate series villain, and Redfield's former STARs superior, Albert Wesker (typical quote "The right to be God that right is now mine!"). His return to Resi is a stroke of genius. Having died once already and been resurrected by an experimental virus, he's something more than human. It's a fact that's underlined in the latest trailer where Wesker appears to teleport Nightcrawler-style during a fight with Chris to appear, gun pressed against Redfield's temple. Infinitely cooler than Resi 5's hero, he makes for a formidable opponent.

After that, fact gives way to a tantalising flick book of images. There are the locations – a riverside factory complex, a pristine research facility complete with gigantic, pod-filled chamber housing God knows what, a rain-whipped container ship, and a subterranean temple, intriguingly dotted with abandoned Umbrella logos and equipment. There are also

terrifying new mutations that include dogs that split and bloom like bloody lilies, flying parasites, scuttling Starship Troopers-style bugs, a gigantic sea beast that makes Resident Evil 4's Del Lago look like a sprat, and a man whose skin boils and erupts into a writhing mass of

black, serpentine corruption.

Then there are the new characters, such as a beak-masked and hooded woman, an elderly man who seems to be wearing Wesker's leather coat, and an irritating pipsqueak in a Hawaiian shirt who comes across as a Bronx-accented Ramon Salazar. Unravelling the labyrinthine connections between all

of these will be the meat on Resi 5's shattered bones.

# **Moving out**

Back in the besieged shack in Kijuju, Resi 5's gameplay rapidly gives up its secrets as clusters of the Infected close in on Chris and Sheva, forcing me to get experienced, fast. Controls are as Resi 4 – left stick for movement, to to enter static aiming mode with to fire and the right stick to move crosshairs – but now there's also an alternative setup. It recognises the ubiquity of first-person shooters, offering familiar two-stick controls with the aiming mode pushed to and firing mapped to the Ironically, having sampled both setups at length, it's the eccentric, original scheme that wins



A nutter with a chainsaw and dogs that try and eat you with their necks... Oh Resi, we've missed you.

# feature

Resident Evil





■ This frantic desert sprint sees a convoy of the Infected chasing after Chris and Sheva.



out - it simply feels more Resi - but it's still good to have the choice.

Capcom's next change actually costs me a life, as I dip into my inventory for some health-replenishing green herbs. Expecting a Resi 4-style gameplay pause enabling me to lazily peruse my items from the comfort of an oversized briefcase, I'm shocked to find that the relentless tide of death continues towards me. Before I can process this, I'm swamped and torn

■ This massive, hooded executioner is the first boss you face off against in Resi 5.

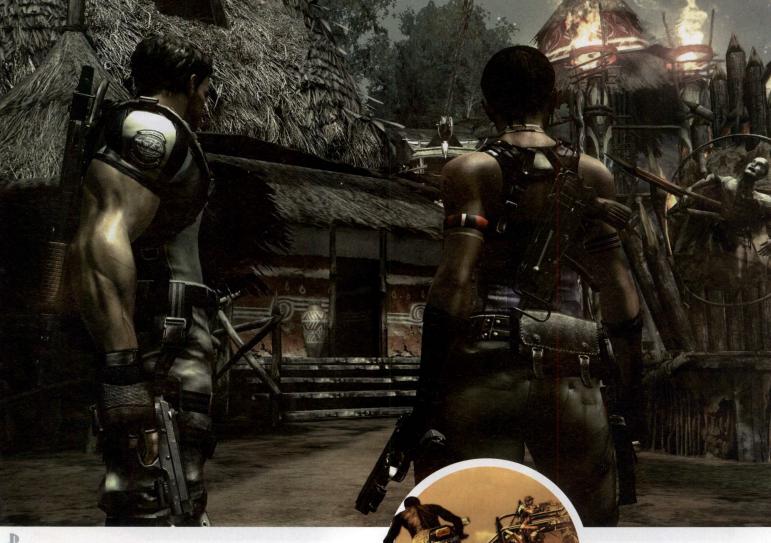
apart. The pampered gamer in me hates this change initially, but Capcom is right to remove the scoundrel's refuge of the pause-menu inventory. Having restarted I'm immediately more aware of my surroundings, ammo levels and Sheva's proximity. Not only can she revive you but also, if close by, you can request items from her inventory or trade yours. Try and take her last clip ('Your sacrifice will be remembered, Sheva') and she'll



■ With enemies more numerous and murderous than ever, having Sheva as backup is a godsend.



■ It seems that even the glorious African wildlife has fallen prey to the T-Virus and its mutations.



"Resi 5 *makes* you risk it all up close."

refuse, but in general she won't leave you hanging. Whether this will be true of human compatriots in the game's online co-op or offline split-screen game is a different matter.

# Cover me

What is certain is this: playing solo, Sheva's AI has been much improved since our first hands-on, providing efficient back up but not clinging to Chris like a nervous girlfriend at a Slayer gig. With the lumbering executioner's arrival making a rapid exit from the shack a no-brainer, the level unfolds into a frantic fight to hold back the locals long enough for a BSAA chopper to arrive. The dusty

streets of Kijuju look amazing, and the standoff ends five long minutes later with Chris and Sheva back-to-back on the roof of a junked bus. Despite having shrugged off hundreds of rounds and exhausted our supply of grenades, we seem only to have succeeded in making the executioner mad(der). No doubt this is a classic Resi first encounter – just enough to put the fear of God into you before the main event.

The second level is called Shantytown and takes Chris and Sheva deeper into Kijuju. It also reveals how Resi 5's hardwired co-op gameplay encompasses branching action. Early on, Chris gives Sheva a leg up onto



Hardwiring the game for co-op may sound like it dilutes the horror, but trust us, you'll still get the fear.

a low roof. She then covers me from the roof as I circle around the building, taking out flying parasites and a tricky Infected with a supply of Molotov cocktails. Later on we have to split up again ("call

me, yeah?") Sheva clearing a building under construction as it fills with the Infected, while I dig in across the road and thin out their numbers with a sniper rifle. Even with Sheva's combat chops it's a tense sequence. There's no grieving and moving on – if she dies, we both fail.

Reunited, we begin to move towards a gated house when the unmistakable sound of a chainsaw firing up fills my ears. If you've played Resident Evil 4 you'll remember the hated Dr Salvador – his potato sack headgear and one-hit kills earned him an instant place in the PlayStation Hall Of Villainy. His West African cousin is, if anything, worse – with a solitary bulging, baleful eye staring from his Hessian mask.

# Sack trick

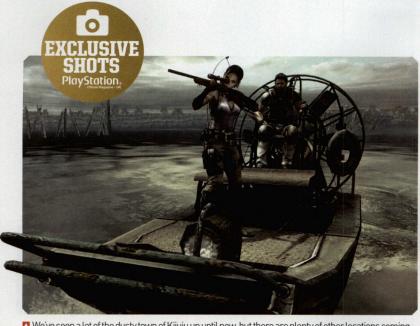
■ Vehicle sections in

the African Savannah

amazing set-pieces.

should make for

Retreating and targeting oil barrels along the route helps to slow him – Resi 5's environments are much more interactive than in previous games – but it's not until I cotton on to the increased importance of



▲ We've seen a lot of the dusty town of Kijuju up until now, but there are plenty of other locations coming.



△ Shoot grenade-lobbing enemies before they have a chance to throw their fizzing explosives.

melee strikes that I manage to take him down. With the boss dazed by an oil-drum detonation I surge forward and trigger a rib-cracking kick with a smile. Just when all you want to do is stay back, Resi 5 makes you risk it all up close. As his death rattle fades the game delivers its punch line by revealing the beast's name: 'Guard'. 'Guard'? My nerves are jangling all over the place, my palms are hot and slick, and this homicidal abomination wasn't even a boss.

Some diehards will likely bemoan the move to co-op and sun-baked horror as a fresh slap in the face -Capcom comprehensively rejecting Resi's 'lone hero versus shuffling zombies' vibe. But playing Resi 5 it's abundantly clear that this is where the series' heart and head now lie. With the increase in firepower, allies and abilities comes a commensurate hike in numbers, types and unremitting savagery of the enemy. In this way

Resi keeps its balance, nurturing the oppressive sense of vulnerability that has been a cornerstone of the game from the beginning. In the post-9/11 world, horror doesn't just lurk in the shadows anymore, but can strike suddenly and terribly. eclipsing the sun and putting a chill in the brightest day. In this respect, Resident Evil 5 is a very modern survival horror game and could well mark a new high point for iconic PlayStation series when it's released next spring. For now though, turn the page to begin our comprehensive history of all things Evil. And remember: no bogarding the red herbs...

# **Architect of Evil**

We talk to Jun Takeuchi, chief producer on Resident Evil 5



What made you pick Chris Redfield as a returning character over any other famous faces you could have chosen?

We wanted to tie up a number of plot lines from the Resident Evil series that were

unresolved. These plot lines revolved around Chris so it was obvious that he would be the main focus of Resi 5. Simply put, you could say that Resi 5 is Chris' story.

# How does Resi 5 evolve the series?

The introduction of online co-op play is a major leap for the Resident Evil series and adds a new dimension to the way players will approach the game. There are also a number of other innovations for the series, such as providing players with the option of the new control scheme which will expand on and improve the gameplay experience.

# Were you worried that co-op would dilute the fear of facing danger alone?

Not at all. In fact, it creates more tension as you have to continually think about your partner - the state of their health, how much ammunition and items they have and, just as importantly, if they are watching your back.

# What scares you?

Deadlines! I'm living a fear-stricken life now by looking at the master submission deadline.

# If you became infected and could choose a mutation, what would it be?

I would like to fly. I don't want to be an insect though...

# So you're infected and must eat people to survive - which famous person would you eat first?

My sense of justice dictates me to eat the ones that are bullying the regular people. However, these people are not very appetising so I would need some aid for my digestion.

# What is the one thing you'd like readers of our mag to know about the game?

Videogaming is a new form of entertainment and we need to believe in its endless possibility.

Where does PS3's Cell make its power felt most for you - in the graphics or what you can do with the gameplay?

I believe that the power of PS3 is in its balance. Therefore, as a developer we need to utilise both the Cell processing power and the huge capacity and fast speed of Blu-ray.

Sum up Resi 5 in four words. Fear you can't forget.



# feature Resident Evil

# Resident Evil timeline

# Blood lines and family ties - the whole story

**E**ver since it unleashed the original Resident Evil, Capcom has been fleshing out the saga of the T-Virus with enough absurd twists and pantomime villains to make Prison Break look like gritty docudrama. We've pieced together information left in diaries, memos and files by those involved in the creation of the virus and the victims of its mutagenic effects to create a timeline of all the important events in the Resiverse. We've only included games and events that are considered canon, though. So that means no Outbreak and just two of the Survivor outings.

Central to the whole story is the Umbrella Corporation, established by Edward Ashford, Ozwell Spencer and James Marcus in 1968 to fund their research into the Progenitor Virus. Over the subsequent 30 years the trio's experiments were well-kept secrets. That is, until the T-Virus outbreak in Raccoon City in 1998 blew the lid off their nightmarish research into bio-weapons. As the Umbrella empire crumbled, other organisations have appeared to fill the void, providing a constant stream of viral horror. So here's to 48 years of zombies, and counting...

# Start

Edward Ashford and Ozwell E Spencer discover a mutagenic virus which they name the Progenitor Virus. James Marcus begins work on how to enhance it to create biological weapons.

Spencer commissions architect George Trevor to build a mansion for him in the remote Arklay Mountains



1960

1962

After losing contact with the STARS Bravo team, the Alpha team - Albert Wesker, Barry Burton, Chris Redfield and Jill Valentine - find Bravo team's downed chopper. They're attacked by a pack of MA-39 Cerberus (zombie dogs) and flee into the Spencer mansion. Valentine and Burton find three Bravo team members zombified, pecked and poisoned respectively.

Chris finds Rebecca Chambers alive, well and cute. Jill and Chris also learn that a member of their own team is a traitor. Suspicion falls on Burton due to Wesker holding his family hostage to guarantee his compliance. When he's revealed as the Umbrella agent, Wesker releases a Tyrant, only to be killed by his own creation. However, he has actually injected himself with an unknown virus to fake his death. Jill defeats the Tyrant and along with the surviving STARS members heads to Raccoon City.

Billy and Rebecca defeat James Marcus, escapi the exploding research facility and go their separate ways - Billy into the forest. Rehecca to the safety of a scary looking mansion. William Birkin returns to the Raccoon City research lab to work on the G-Virus, while Wesker continues to send STARS teams up against Umbrella's bio-weapons to collect the data.

STARS Bravo team is sent out to investigate a series of arisly cannibalistic murders in the Arklay Mountains Their helicopter

is forced to crash land and the team comes under attack from zombies. Young medic Rebecca Chambers meets military prisoner Billy Coen who's on the run after his prison van was attacked by the undead. Forming an alliance they make their way to the Arklay Research Facility to discover James Marcus, reanimated by his own mutant leeches

The Raccoon Times reports an unusual killing in the Arklay Mountains.

27 May 1998

arrives in

to look for

her brother

Raccoon City

24-25 Jul 1998

Chris becomes Umbrella sends in a increasingly team lead by agent frustrated at the Hunk to infiltrate lack of action by William Birkin's lab and Raccoon Police retrieve a sample of Chief Brian Irons the G-Virus. Birkin is despite the fatally wounded but Spencer mansion injects himself with incident and the G-Virus, mutates, growing number and slaughters of T-Virus victims. Hunk's team as Chris eventually they escape via the sewers. Shattered leaves the city to vials of the T-Virus infiltrate Umbrella's European infect rats, starting the headquarters Raccoon City outbreak

23 Jul 1998

22 Jul 1998

Claire Redfield Raccoon

sample of G-Virus in Sherry's pendant.

They fight a mutated Birkin, killing him.

City

City Limits

The Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service (UBCS) enters Raccoon City. Jill Valentine is informed by Brad Vickers that Umbrella has released a Nemesis bio-weapon into the city with the express aim of killing STARS members. After escaping from the mutant assassin Jill meets a unit of UBCS including Carlos Oliveira with whom she works with to find a means of escape. Making their way to the Raccoon Clock Tower, Jill signals for a

chopper only for Nemesis to shoot it down. In the ensuing battle Jill is infected by the T-Virus and blacks out. Carlos carries her to safety.

28 Sep 1998

Chris, just as rookie cop Leon Kennedy arrives for his first day on the force. Claire finds William Birkin's daughter Sherry abandoned, and learns that an improved Tyrant is on the loose. Leon meets Ada Wong, claiming to be looking for her boyfriend. Leon and Claire converge on Birkin's lab, discovering the Tyrant is after a

29 Sep 1998

22 Sep 1998

Fellow BSAA agent Chris Redfield lands in West Africa to investigate a viral outbreak There he ioins forces with local BSAA operative, Sheva Alomar, to face a new threat.

Jul - Aug 1998

2008

Jill Valentine apparently dies in the service of the Assessment (BSAA), the organisation dedicated to stopping

deliberate viral outbreaks.

2006



Bio terrorist Curtis Miller releases the T-Virus in a US airport. Fortunately

hattle-hardened highazard vets Leon Kennedy and Claire Redfield 'just happen' to be present to handle the situation. Check out page 16 to learn more about the new CGI movie Resident Evil Degeneration.

2005

US Government Agent Leon Kennedy's search for Ashley Graham, the US President's missing daughter, takes him to rural Spain where he discovers villagers infected by mind-controlling parasites known as Las Plagas. Cult leader Osmund Saddler is responsible and has designs on global domination. Leon manages to rescue Ashley and escape with the help of Ada Wong, who continues to work for Wesker, locating virus samples. She delivers a fake sample of Las Plagas to him suggesting she is operating as a double agent.

2004













Resident Evil Dead Aim



Resident Evil 4



A year after the mansion is complete, George Trevor visits Spencer in his new residence. Unbeknownst to Trevor, his wife Jessica and daughter Lisa, who'd travelled ahead, have been used as viral test subjects by Spencer. Jessica shows no reaction to the Type A virus. Lisa, however, reacts violently to a Type B strain, mutates rapidly and goes insane, ripping her mother's face off, believing her to be an impostor. Trevor is imprisoned and dies within the mansion's walls, eventually becoming a Crimson Headan evolved strain of zombie with long nails.





The Umbrella Corporation is created by Spencer to act as a front for his research. Ashford. who wants to use the virus for good, is accidentally infected by his son Alexander and dies. Alexander inherits the estate.

1968

Alexander Ashford begins work on his own research facility in the Antarctic. Much later this becomes a part of the ever-expanding Umbrella Corporation

1969

Alexander Ashford researches genetically enhanced intelligence, cloning two 'children' from the DNA of great, great grandmother Veronica Ashford: Alfred (normal intelligence) and Alexia (super genius).



Albert Wesker and William Birkin start at the Umbrella training academy. James Marcus combines leech DNA with the Progenitor Virus to create the Tyrant or T-Virus. He's frustrated that he can only use animals for testing. Birkin begins experiments using the newly found Ebola virus.



1971 1977

1967

Barry Burton and Chris Redfield join the new STARS (Special Tactics And Rescue) police task force founded by Albert Wesker in 1996. Soldier Billy Coen is arrested and sentenced to death after a botched US Army operation overseas ends in the massacre of 23 innocent African villagers.

The Nemesis Project begins, attempting to combine a NE-Alpha parasite with a Tyrant.

Acting on Spencer's orders, Birkin and Wesker assassinate James Marcus, dump his body and assume the roles of lead researchers working on creating a Tyrant - an intelligent T-Virus monster. Unfortunately only one in ten million people has the correct genetic code for 'successful' infection, severely limiting progress. They inject Lisa Trevor with the NE-Alpha or Nemesis parasite, an off-shoot of the T-Virus. She absorbs it and generates the first strain of Gene or G-Virus.

1988

cryo-stasis for fifteen years. 1983

functions. She

infects herself

and enters

Alfred Ashford learns that he and his sister were 'born' from their father's experiments. In retaliation they use him as a guinea pig for Alexia's T-Veronica virus, created by crossing the Progenitor virus with an older strain found in queen ants. Alexander mutates into a creature called Nosferatu and is imprisoned under the Arctic research facility. Alexia discovers that a lengthy, low temperature gestation period enables a viral host to mutate without losing higher brain

The first T-Virus zombies are created while Birkin fuses reptilian DNA with a T-Virus-infected human embryo to create the first Hunter. Alexia Ashford becomes the senior researcher at Umbrella's Rockfort Training Facility. She's ten vears old.



1997

Claire discovers her brother has headed to Europe and sets out to find him. Leon strikes a deal with US government to ensure Sherry's safety, but she still falls into Wesker's hands. Hunk escapes Raccoon City with a sample of G-Virus, as does Ada Wong who delivers it to Wesker now working for one of Umbrella's rivals.

Carlos manages to discover a vaccine in the Raccoon City Hospital and cures Jill of her T-Virus infection. They then discover the government is going to nuke Raccoon City. More pressing matters include the rampaging Nemesis and Carlos' sinister UBSC teammate Nicholai Ginovaef, T-Virus cure known as Daylight. After dispensing of both with a rail gun and rocket launcher respectively, Jill and Carlos are rescued by Barry Burton in a chopper as the nuclear strike incinerates the city.

1991

Anti Umbrella agent Ark Thompson loses his memory in a helicopter crash on Sheena Island. While trying to find out who he is he discovers and destroys an Umbrella research centre specialising in Tyrant development under Vincent Goldmar

25-26 Nov 1998

Claire Redfield, still searching for the whereabouts of her missing brother Chris, attempts to infiltrate the Umbrella HQ in Paris. She's rumbled by security, though, captured and sent to Umbrella's prison facility located on Rockfort

1981

17 Dec 1998

30 Sep 1998

1 Oct 1998

Chris and Jill, and Albert Wesker launch separate assaults on Sergei Vladimir's Tyrant research centre in Russia. The destruction of Umbrella's last stronghold sees the beginning of the end for the evil corporation, but while Redfield and Valentine rejoice Wesker is the real winner as he's stolen Umbrella's extensive bioweapon database and intends to resurrect Umbrella with himself as its CEO

**2003** 



Ex-Umbrella researcher Morpheus D Duvall attacks the Spencer Rain cruise ship, threatening to launch T-Virus warheads at US soil, US Stratcom agent Bruce McGiven is sent to bring Duvall down, who then injects himself with the experimental T-G Virus. At first there are no signs of infection but as McGiven blasts Duvall, rapid mutation causes him to explode.

2002

Wesker attacks Rockfort Island and in the process starts a T-Virus outbreak. Claire escapes her cell and meets fellow prisoner Steve Burnside. Alfred Ashford blames Claire for the attack, releasing a Tyrant to destroy her before escaping to the Antarctic to reanimate his sister Alexia, whose 15 years of cryo-stasis are up. Claire and Steve follow him and discover Alexia's T-Veronica experiment has turned her into a powerful but mentally stable mutant, Chris Redfield turns up, helping to defeat Alexia while Steve is infected by the T-Veronica virus, dies and has his corpse swiped by a now super-human Wesker.

Dec 1998



# Heroes and villains

Meet the good, the bad and the savagely-murdered-by-reanimated-corpses who make up Resident Evil's cast

### Ashley Graham

Impossibly perky jailbait who's kidnapped in a plan to use her as the host for a Las Plagas parasite, with the ultimate aim that she'll take it to her dad, the US Prez. scued by Leon Kennedy who, fearing a midnight visit by the FBI, rebuffs her advances during their escape

Ex-USAF member Chris joined the Raccoon City Police as part of the STARS task force. After the events of the original Resi, Chris led the fight against Umbrella, travelling the globe to destroy its bio-weapons. Currently in Africa as a member of the Bioterrorism Security Assessment Alliance.

His first day with the Raccoon City Police coincided with the original outbreak of the zombifying T and G viruses. Six years on he's sent to rescue the President's daughter, Ashley, from the grasp of an evil religious cult and a new threat, the Las Plagas parasite. Worst. CV. Even

Ex-Air Force buddy of Chris Redfield, Burton was part of the same STARS team in Resident Evil. With Wesker holding his family hostage, Burton *almost* betrays Jill Valentine and Redfield, but mans up and becomes a key figure in the anti-Umbrella movement. Wife still furious.

☑ Steve Burnside (dead) Whiny son of an Umbrella staffer who helps Claire Redfield beat the corporation in Code Veronica. After killing his zombified dad he's mutated by the T-Veronica virus and tries to kill her. His humanity prompts him to save her but he dies in the process. Wesker kept the remains. Mwa hal

☑ Brad Vickers
As the STARS Alpha team chopper pilot who abandons his squad in the middle of a forest at the start of Resident Evil. Brad is arquably responsible for most of the good guys' troubles. Happily, payback comes when, having returned in Besi 3, he's killed messily by Nemesis. Good.















### ☐ Claire Redfield

The only Resi hero not to have formal combat training (apart from a few tricks her brother taught herl. Despite this, Claire escaped Raccoon City at the height of Resident Evil 2's outbreak, developing a hatred for Umbrella and taking the fight to them in the US and Antarctica while searching for her missing brother.

### Part of Resident Evil's original STARS team betrayed by Wesker in Spencer Mansion She was then targeted by the STARS-snuffing Nemesis

during the Raccoon City outbreak in Resi 3. Survived but the latest Resi 5 trailer shows her tombstone with the dates 1974-2006. But is she really gone? Really?

Implausibly 18-year-old medic for the STARS Bravo team (did she start medical training at 11?) and the only Bravo member to survive Resident Evil. Her other claim to zombie fame is that she meets and defeats T-Virus creator James Marcus with the help of Billy Coen in series prequel Resident Evil Zero

A South American merc who's part of the Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service (UNBC) ordered to Raccoon City in a bid to control the T-Virus outbreak. Despite working for the enemy he joins up with Jill Valentine, escapes the city, and becomes part of the anti-Umbrella movement with Redfield and Burton.

A former soldier convicted of killing 23 civilians (*23*!), Coen becomes an unlikely ally of Rebecca Chambers as they both struggle to stay alive in the Ārklay Research Facility in Resi Evil Zero. While still guilty as all hell, he's allowed to walk free at the end of Resi Zero as Chambers foolishly seeks refuge in the Spencer Mansion.

# Luis Sera (dead)

A native of Resi 4's cursed village and an impossibly smouldering scientist who originally assisted Saddler with his research into the Las Plagas parasite before teaming up with Leon. Redeems himself as the inventor of the parasite-removing machine that saves Leon, but is killed by Saddler.

# feature Resident Evil

### **□** Hunk

An Umbrella operative sent into the Raccoon City outbreak to retrieve a sample of the G-Virus. By shooting up William Birkin's lab his team was indirectly responsible for the city-wide T-Virus outbreak in Resident Evil 2. Cheers, Hunk. Certainly explain his nickname, 'Mr Death'

# Nicholai Ginovaef (dead) Russian member of the

Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service who callously records combat data during Resi 3 as his fellow mercs fight the mutations roaming Raccoon City. He's also implicated in both Resident Evil Outbreak and Survivor. Gets chewed up by

# ☑ Alfred Ashford (dead)

Cloned grandson of Umbrella founder Edward Ashford, twin of Alexia and a certifiable, cross-dressing nutjob who poses as sis while she's away When he finds out that he's one of his father's experiments (and a borked one at that) he goes mad(der). Eventually killed by Steve Burnside.

### **☑ Sergei Vladimir** (dead)

An ex-Soviet soldier who became an Umbrella executive responsible for running its military division. As one of the rare people with T-Virus-compatible DNA he was cloned and used as a template for early Tyrants, specifically Resident Evil 2's T-103 aka Mr X.

# Osmund Saddler (dead)

Mysterious leader of the Los Illuminados religious cult, who guarantees a loyal following with the liberal use of mind controlling Las Plagas parasites. His plan to take over the world by infecting the US government is foiled by Leon Kennedy's RPG to the chops.

### ☑ James Marcus (dead)

A co-founder of the Umbrella Corporation who created the T-Virus. Murdered by Albert Wesker and William Birkin, Marcus cheated death by bonding with virally modified leeches and took his revenge on Umbrella by releasing the T-Virus on the Arklay Research Centre.



## ☑ Alexia Ashford (dead)

A child genius thanks to her father's genetic tinkering, Alexia created the T-Veronica virus by combing the Progenitor virus with a strain found in ants. She tests it on herself, using cryo-stasis to (initially) trigger a stable mutation. Eventually turns into a giant dragonfly.











Ada Wong
Ice cold double agent who specialises in collecting viral samples during the chaos of an outbreak. Turns up in Raccoon City and, later, in Spain to snatch the G-Virus and Los Plagas respectively for Albert Wesker. Her affections for Leon, however suggest her heart, if not her lovalties, really lie elsewhere

### ☐ Dr Salvador (dead)

The most iconic and terrifying of Resident Evil 4's Los Ganados mutants. His medical qualifications aren't exactly clear and, as the chainsaw and sackcloth mask suggest, he's strayed a fair way from his Hippocratic Oath. If Leon fails to fend off his charging attack, he chainsaws Kennedy's head clean off. 'Take two Nurofen...

# ☐ Jack Krauser (dead) One time friend and fellow

agent of Leon Kennedy, Krauser supposedly died in a helicopter crash in 2002, but turns up two years later as a super-human minion of Albert Wesker. He kidnaps Ashley to get close to Saddler and nab a Las Plagas sample. Dies three times during Resi 4's story mode and mini-games

### Ramon Salazar (dead)

Originally from the family that sealed the Las Plagas parasite underground, pipsqueak Ramon was persuaded by Saddler to dig it up and infect the locals. After confronting Leon and Ashley several times he mutates into a giant, betentacled abomination, Leon makes short' work of him.



### ■ William Birkin (dead)

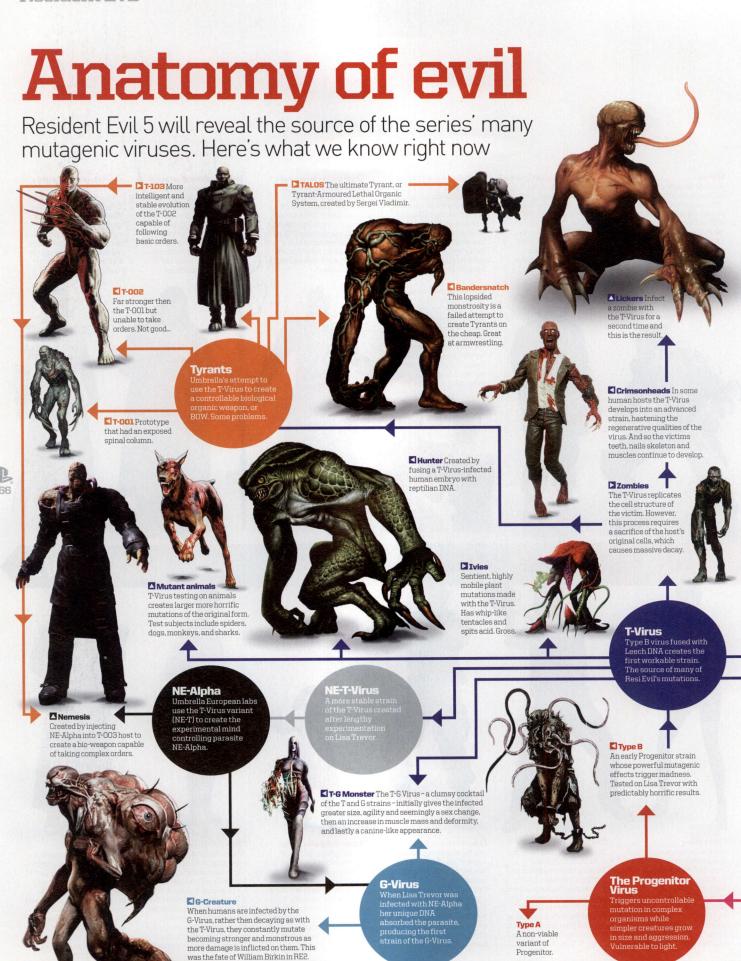
A fellow (and rival) Umbrella researcher of Wesker's, with whom he assassinated James Marcus in order to fast-track his promotion to head of T-Virus research. Created the G-Virus and was almost killed when Umbrella operative Hunk steamed in to secure it. Injected himself with the virus to survive, albeit as a mutant.

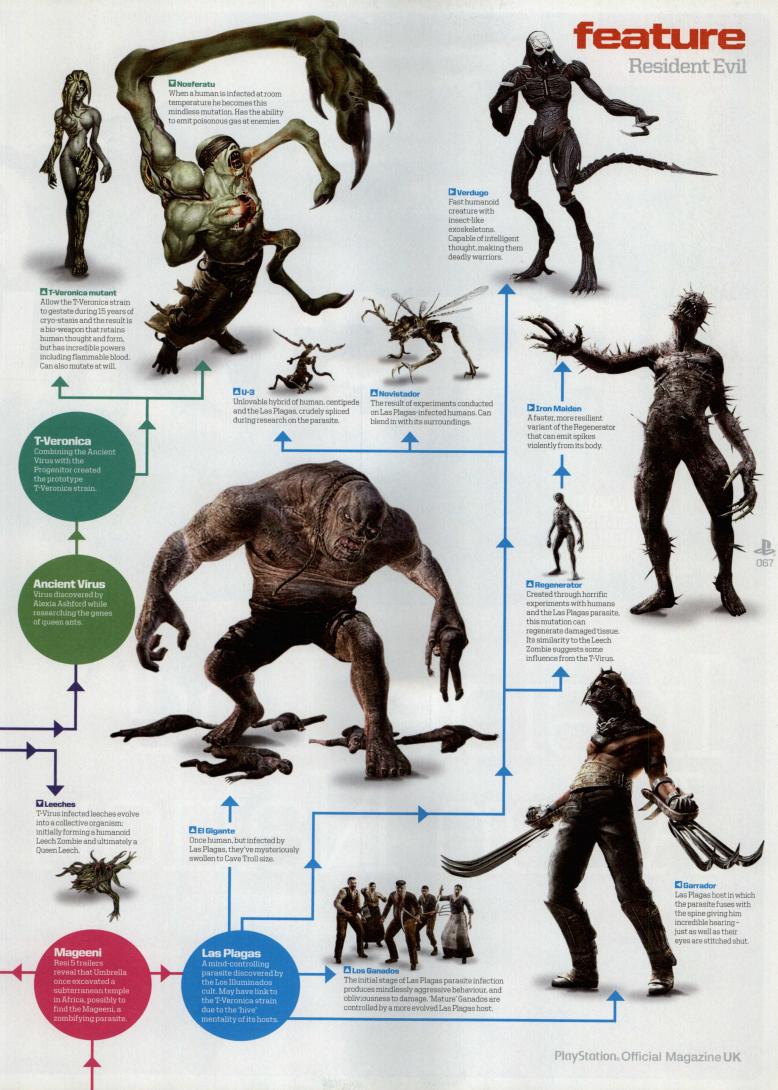


# △ Albert Wesker

For us, the greatest villain on PlayStation. Bert has played a key role in nearly every part of the saga. One-time Umbrella researcher, STARS founder, anti-Umbrella conspirator and super-human ass-kicker. Wants to rebuild the Umbrella empire to serve his will and requires a sample of every bio-weapon virus to do so

# feature Resident Evil





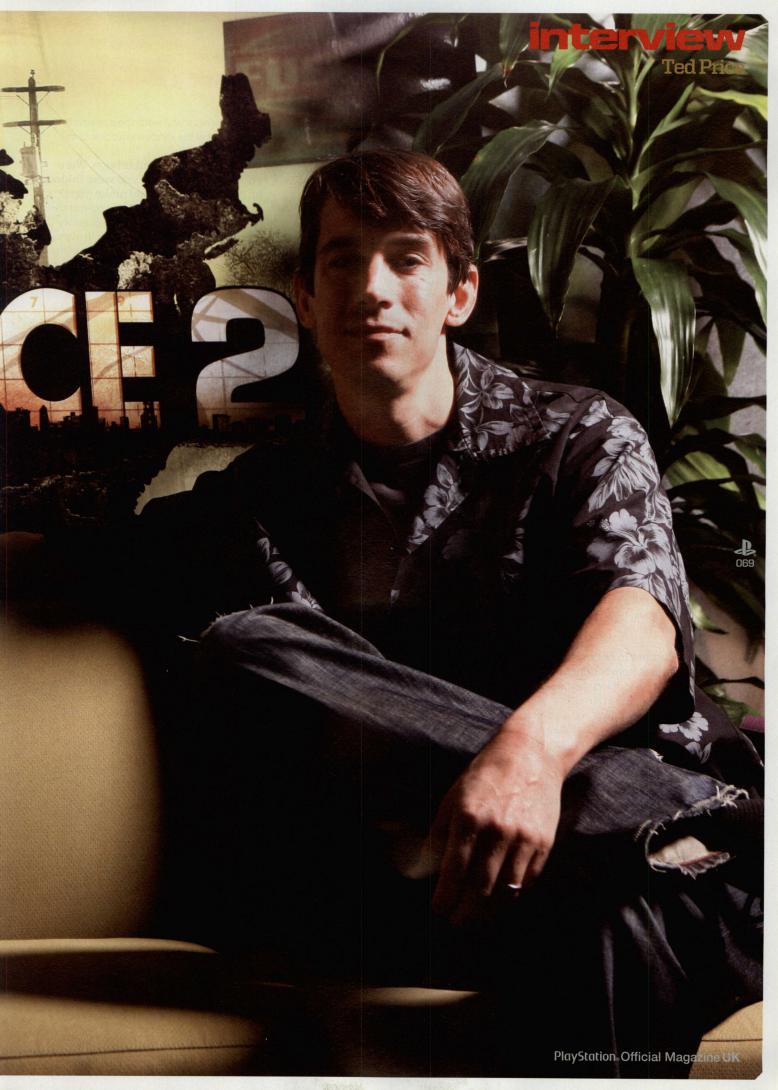
**OPM** interview

# 8 7 6 5 4

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REPORT PlayStation

# Inside The Alien Vation

We talk to Insomniac president Ted Price about Resistance, Ratchet, boss battles, one-hit kills and what's coming next...





# Resistance 2's guns feel much more powerful and aggressive this time out. Were you keen to improve them?

Yeah, we switched to a two-weapon system to unleash a little bit more. In the original game we allowed the player to carry all of the weapons, and we had to be careful not to overpower any particular one because the player might be able to break some setups. But with R2 we were able to create weapons that do some crazy things. The Splicer, for example, fires many, many saw blades they're bouncing around, taking off limbs and wreaking havoc. But if you were able to carry that gun around all the time, it would be less fun, so what we've done is given you some badass weapons at specific points in the game, so that you can get your kicks, but not get tired of those spikes and that excitement.

# With only two weapons, are you worried you'll lose some of the variety and imagination you're known for?

I don't think so. We brought back some of the weapons from Resistance 1 that we really liked – the Bullseye and the Auger – and we updated their functionality so that they would feel fresh. But at the same time, we created new weapons, using the same approach that we had with Resistance 1 – going for broke and saying, 'what can we do that's ultimately going to be fun?'. It doesn't have to be terribly practical, it doesn't have to conform to the physics that we know here in the world, it just has to be fun, cool looking, and fit into the universe in some way.

# Did making Ratchet in between the Resistance games help technically?

Ratchet was a huge help. It focused on scale, just like Resistance 2 does in terms of creating very large landscapes and big events in the environment, and we were able to leverage the tech development for Ratchet and use it as a starting point for Resistance 2.

# With the emphasis on big set-pieces, do you feel like you've lost that quirky parallel history vibe that the first game had?

Not at all. In fact, I think that bringing the game to America has allowed us to play up the alternate history vibe even better.

America is simply easier for us to access, as American developers, and we can travel to different places and do the research easier than we could in England. We learned a lot in Resistance 1 about what was needed to create an alternate history, and I don't think we had as much time to implement those little bits and pieces then like we have now [like] the radio broadcasts from Henry Stillman, which has a very 1950s vibe to it.

# Tell us about the development of the Chimera. Were you not tempted to make them more outlandish?

When we were prototyping Resistance 1 - a long time ago, before PS3 was released - we began with this space opera featuring lizardmen. And by lizardmen, I mean giant lizards walking around with tails - definitely not very humanoid. We came to realise that it's not as fun to shoot non-humanoids. You don't get the same satisfaction, for whatever reason. When we moved in a humanoid direction, the game suddenly got a lot more fun. So we came up with the theory that the Chimera are a parasitic species and they take whatever life form is on a particular planet, and modify it to meet their needs. So the hybrids, the main foot soldiers in the game, are pretty close to humans because they spend the least time being converted. The more outlandish creatures in the first game - the Angels, the Howlers, the Widowmaker - they're also made of human parts, but it takes longer for them to gestate and pop out as something that's not very humanoid.

environments that it would be a shame to throw it out of the window after one game.

# The online component is huge. Were you ever worried that you were taking on more than you could make good?

That's always a risk. We discuss control of design scope here constantly, because we know that it's easy to bite off more than you can chew, especially if you're coming off the success of previous games. When we began discussing 60-player multiplayer, the first thing we ran into was the realisation that having 60 players in an environment can be overwhelming and chaotic, and there was no way we were going to be able to pull this off unless we introduced some very low-level design techniques to mitigate that chaos. And those design features ended up being squads and a dynamic objective system.

# You were well into development when COD4 came out. Did you play it, and did it have an effect on you?

It's one of the only games I played all the way

# "We began Resistance with lizardmen. I mean giant lizards with tails."

# We have to ask about the Furies. Not being able to shoot them was one of the only things we didn't like. Was there much discussion about this?

Yeah, the Furies were challenging for us. Originally they were designed to pop onto land and attack you. But this ended up being problematic for a number of reasons. First we had them shooting you, but that looked goofy. Then we had them crawling after you, but that made them too easy to kill. Finally we wanted you to be apprehensive about falling in the water. So we made them invincible to create what was in effect 'electric water'. If you shoot them they dive under the surface so they're impossible to hit. Was it the right thing to do? Well, given that water in Resistance 1 was instant-kill without any explanation, I think it was an improvement. At least you know what killed you.

# It's set up for a third game - was there always a plan to make more than two?

From the very beginning, whenever we come up with a game concept, whether it's Spyro, Ratchet or whatever, our intention is to create a long-life franchise. You put so much time into creating characters and stories and

through last year. It was fantastic; a lot of us here really enjoyed seeing what they did with weaving their story into the game. It was a great balance. They also had some great variety. Even though you're fighting the same soldier over and over again, it felt varied. We took some great inspiration from [that], and we were able to take it in a different direction because we had so many different types of creatures and so many opportunities to change things. It really pushed us to do even more with our own setups.

We also saw the opportunity to do something that no other FPS was doing, and that was introducing bosses. Bosses are something we've done forever with Ratchet, and putting bosses into a first-person shooter ended up being a pretty big challenge. When you're fighting against a 300ft monster, it's not practical to use the same techniques that you've been using throughout the game against smaller enemies. So as designers we have to come up with a way to believably take on these bosses and still make it fun.

Did you ever think about making the boss battles more interactive like, say, the Scarab boss in Halo 3?



It depends on what you mean by interactive. The bosses are all interactive in that you have to damage them to kill them. You also have to avoid their attacks. But our first goal for the boss battles was to create memorable moments. Being picked up by a 300ft Leviathan and being thrown across the rooftops of Chicago should be memorable. Running like hell from the missiles of an angry 200ft Goliath should be memorable. Sliding down a tilted dock into the jaws of a giant Kraken should be memorable.

# Compared to other recent shooters -Far Cry 2, Fallout 3 - is it fair to say Resistance 2 is linear?

Yeah. You can say it's linear. We knew that we wanted to make a story-driven first-person shooter. We spent a lot of time on telling more of the story in-game, so it doesn't feel like you're doing two different things - one, being told a story, and two, playing a game.

# Do you think there's still more to come from traditional first-person shooters vs, say, open world shooters?

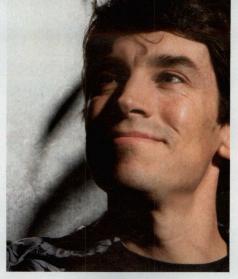
I think open world games are fantastic. But it's harder to tell a linear story in an open world, because the pacing is a little bit more unpredictable - you don't know where the players are going to be at any one time.

# Apart from going open world or online, do you see any other ways in which shooters can evolve?

It's funny, to me, that first-person shooters get lumped together no matter what features they have. Most of them have something interesting and different to bring. The one overriding feature tends to be the perspective - the point of view - and that everyone has a gun, or multiple guns. But in terms of their approach to gameplay, and how they integrate story, and whether it's open world or linear - a lot of first-person shooters do a good job of differentiating themselves.

# Do you guys have a friendly rivalry with Killzone 2 developer Guerrilla, and are you pleased that it was their game rather than yours that was pushed back until after Christmas?

Well, first of all, I wouldn't say at all that we have a rivalry. We've been friends for a long time. Our engine director has been over there to hang out with the Guerrilla guys, and they've come here, so we definitely respect what they're doing, and their stuff looks beautiful. In terms of the scheduling, that was up to the different territories. SCEA is publishing Resistance 2 and SCEE is publishing Killzone 2, so I think you'd have to ask a Sony person about that.

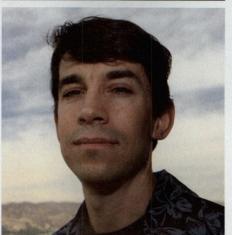


# Who is... Ted Price

Ted Price established Insomniac Games in 1994 with \$30,000 in savings and help from programming brothers Alex and Brian Hastings. All three played PC shooter Doom, and their first game, Disruptor for PS1 in 1996, was also a first-person shooter. The company went on to create the Spyro series on PS1, the Ratchet & Clank series on PS2 and Resistance on PS3. Price is currently the President and CEO of the California-based studio







# How involved are you with the PSP version of Resistance?

We exchange information about the stories for both games to ensure they're both lining up. When the PSP guys starting working on that version of Resistance, we gave them the backstory, we told them everything we were doing with Resistance 2, and went back and discussed the best way for the two games to work together and support each other. They came up with a really cool story that fits in the Resistance universe. So it's been a very collaborative process.

# One of the big Sony success stories of 2008 was LittleBigPlanet. Do you think that in sackboy Sony has finally found its Sonic or Mario?

Sony's always been very vocal about not having a mascot. And there are a lot of very strong characters within the PlayStation universe, going all the way back to PS1 -Crash Bandicoot, Spyro, Solid Snake, Lara Croft. These are all characters that have been synonymous with one or more of the PlayStation platforms and I understand and agree with Sony's philosophy to not put one character forward and say 'this is the mascot', because there are so many other great options for people to latch on to.

# There are more and more high-profile figureheads within the games industry. You're the spokesperson for very big exclusive Sony titles. Do you ever dislike talking to the press?

I enjoy talking to the press - it's taught me to think a little bit more before I speak and also helps me and the others to understand what the rest of the world is thinking. It's easy for us, when we're developing 24/7, to get too narrowly focused on what we do. If we don't talk to people who are observing our games critically, then we lose perspective and it's more difficult for us to deliver what fans and critics want.

# Do you have an example of a time when you've been badly misquoted?

Haha! Yes! Tons. It's easy to get upset about it, but whenever I've been misquoted, I've gone back to what I've said in the interview and generally it's been my fault for not being careful enough. I understand that things get taken out of context, and some people who're writing articles have a specific agenda that I may not understand, and as a result I may get myself into trouble. It's taught all of us here at Insomniac to really focus on what's most important, and that's the games, and helping people to understand what it is that we are trying to accomplish with the games that we make.



# feature

PS3 Wordcloud

# PS3 in 2008

See how every game scored at a glance

SoldierOfFortunePayback
RoneInTheDarkinferno
CivilizationRevoluti

Arm

BlitzTheLeague2 — Mercenaries2WorldInFlames

Condemned PES2009 edForSpeedUndercover

The Orange Box Buzz QuizTV NHL2KS

NBALive09 MidnightClubLosAngeles

kyria Chronicle WoodsPGATournamentIII

Mirrors Edge

**MotorStormPacificRift**Monopoly

Monopoly

BurnoutParadise

**ELegoIndianaJones** 

SBK08SuperbikeWorldChampionship

HailToTheChimp

TITE SOLL BuiltarHeroke



TombRaiderUnderworld
LostPlanet MXvsATVUntamed
DragonBallZBurstLimit
SegaSuperstars Tennis Fracture
Legendary GranTurismo5Prologue
BrothersInArmsHellsHighway

SoulcaliburIV

IVIAUUENNELUS Enn7nuantumNfSolace

-007QuantumOfSolace

TOTAL STATE OF THE PROPERTY OF

1098765432 How the cloud works

Every wondered what a year's worth of games looks like? Yeah, like this We've taken every PS3 game released in the UK during 2008 and arranged it on this page – the bigger the score, the bigger the letters.



feature

Heavy Rain

# WORLD EXCLUSIVE REPORT Proystation.

Heavy Rain is the most ambitious project on PS3, pushing the capabilities of the console and the boundaries of what games are about. We went behind the scenes at Quantic Dream to find out more...

#### feature Heavy Rain

# "I have a dream..."

EXCLUSIVE ACCESS
PlayStation

David Cage, Quantic Dream's founder and head, talks Heavy Rain

don't make games for the Daily Mail." David Cage is explaining the ethos behind Heavy Rain, the most intriguing exclusive currently in development for PS3. He tells us that this ambitious undertaking - a noir thriller utilising state-ofthe-art motion and facial capture - will be a mature experience that he hopes will "explore things that are serious and related to adults". He says, "I don't think we do anything worse than what you see on TV at 8 o'clock at home. And I don't think being interactive gives you fantastic power to change the minds of people and make them do things they'd never think of doing otherwise. We are like movies or books. I just try to create an experience that is entrancing and definitely not for kids." Obviously, we're in.

Wet and wild

For now, though, he's keeping the exact story a secret. Heavy Rain's subtitle, The Origami Killer, is the only real clue as to what the plot involves. In the Taxidermist demo, the tech demo developed to show off Heavy Rain's gameplay, an inquisitive journalist called Madison explores a house in search of the paperfolding murderer but finds, instead, a gutted body in a bath and a different serial killer who stuffs female victims and poses them in idyllic scenes of domestic bliss. It's a dark set-piece that demonstrates Cage's vision: an immersive, cinematic experience where you're partly involved in, and partly directing, the action. The unusual controls see you aiming the character's head with the left analogue stick and using 12 to move in the direction you're looking. It frees the camera to cut between angles or pan across the action without confusing the player, who'll always move in the direction they're facing. Later, during a chase, the player must snatch at prompts flashing on screen: run left or right, remain calm or panic? Each decision branches the story, creating another path, another eventuality.

It might sound like a game-long interactive cut-scene but in practice you're always in control and, most importantly, involved in the action. "What's really important to us is that we use the interface to create immersion," Cage explains. "When

Rain will fall

Madison 1 is an ambitious, risk-taking journalist and one of the few characters named in Heavy Rain so far. The story opens with the discovery of a body on a patch of wasteland 2. This man arrives on the murder scene 3 with a police escort. Our hunch is that he's an FBI psychological profiler brought in to examine the Orioami Killer's latest victim.

your character hides you need to hold buttons on the controller to remain hidden." So for Madison to hide by awkwardly cramming herself into a cupboard, the player must press an equally uncomfortable arrangement of buttons. "We use the interface as much as we can to make you feel like your character feels. At the same time we try to simplify the interface as much as possible. The challenge shouldn't be how to do things, it should be what do you want to do and what are the consequences. With a simple system people can forget the interface and do things naturally. The focus is: 'What will happen? What are the consequences of my actions?" But while the Taxidermist is a great example of the gameplay and production values, you won't

be seeing it in the finished game. Madison, yes, but

Quantic Dream is shooting for. In particular, their work

with actors and motion capture; something they

that particular scenario is simply a demonstration of what

"Decisions branch the story."

first showed in The Casting, a short film

featuring an actress playing a spurned lover. "We learnt many things," says Cage of this initial experience with PS3 tech. "The first thing is the importance of the acting. Aurélie Brancilhon (the star of The Casting) is a fantastic actress. We felt that we only got about 50% of her performance in the final result. We didn't have the technology to capture the eyes so we had to post-animate that by hand. The result is okay but there is

that by hand. The result is okay but there is something wrong. With new technology, we've motion captured the eyes now and we do that for every single character."

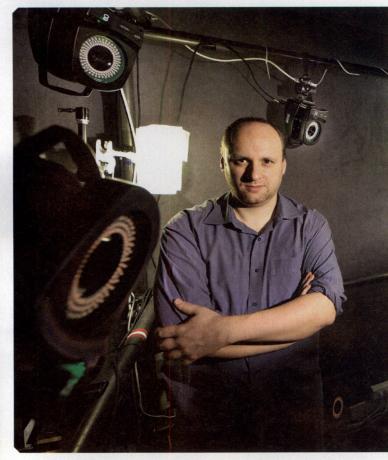
**Acting up** 

The results of Quantic Dream's advances in motion capture are impressive. We see a junkie called Nathaniel, a bodyguard and a policeman performing various facial animations captured from the original actors. We also see an old man, delivering one side of a conversation about how his son "is not involved in these murders". The words may be infuriatingly cryptic but he is eerily realistic to look at









# "In Heavy Rain even dying isn't the end."

- the skin wrinkled, cheeks scrunched, the eyes darted. The policeman in particular, moodily lit in semi-shadow, was truly indistinguishable from his real life counterpart. And the really exciting news? Everything we're looking at is being shown at in-game quality.

According to Cage, "It's much more than just recreating an actor – it's recreating a performance. Recreating a human is easy: we have a 3D scanner, we scan your face and there you are. Where it becomes difficult is if you move. And even more difficult if you talk. All this has to look real, and it's really awkward. It's about getting the same subtlety I'd get if I was filming you. I'd get the reflections in your eyes, the way they move, your stance, every detail. There are so many things that create an impression – the slightest detail may be important to the general impression."

#### The plot thickens

The attention to detail is absolutely crucial to the game's success because, as Cage explains, Heavy Rain is an incredibly complex project in terms of storytelling. "Usually a movie script has 100-120 pages. Heavy Rain has about 2,000 pages; roughly the size of 20 movies. And it doesn't tell one story, it tells 12 stories interlinked with

#### History

Omikron: The Nomad Soul (1999, PC, Dreamcast)
Quantic Dream's first game was an FPS adventure that saw players
entering another dimension as a body-hopping 'nomad soul' trying to solve
a series of murders. Turns out the killings are the work of demons trying to
return their banished leader Astaroth to power. It featured David Bowie as
Boz, an electronic deity that leads a group called The Awakened.









PlayStation 2

PLAYSTATION 3

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■ David Cage is justly proud of Quantic Dream's 3D scanning facility, which enables the development team to capture incredibly detailed physical likenesses.

different options and consequences. We use this technique to draw our story like a rubber band - it'll stretch depending on your actions." According to Cage, in Heavy Rain even dying becomes a flexible concept. "There's no game over' situation here. We treat death like an event in the script and the story continues."

> The game's night-time opening sets the tone for the journey ahead. A body has been discovered on a patch of wasteland; policeman scour the bushes with torches, rain lashes the squad cars, wind whips at the tape cordoning off the area, and at its centre is a shallow grave blasted by spotlights. It's a brief glimpse at the oppressive

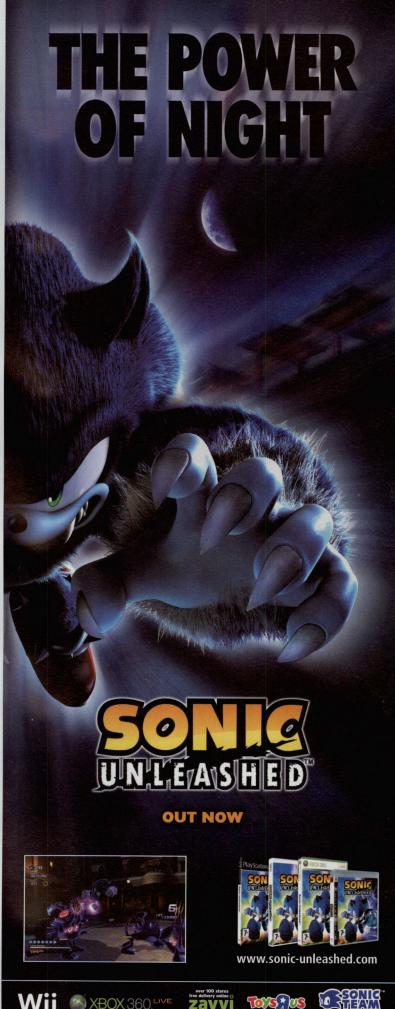
atmosphere Quantic Dream will be using to tell the story and sets a bracingly grim tone.

This murky crime scene opener also poses many more questions than it answers but, if Cage is right, what happens next in Heavy Rain is entirely up to you, "It's an interactive experience. You're thrust into the shoes of the hero of a movie that changes based on your actions. Hopefully it's an exciting premise - I think it's going to be a very new type of experience. You can never say if it's good or bad at this stage, but I'm pretty sure it's going to be different."

#### Fahrenheit (2005, PS2)

This supernatural murder mystery put you in control of several characters involved in a ritualistic killing. The main hero was the apparent murderer but you also controlled the police investigating the case. The third-person action was intercut with cinematic quick-time events while controls mirrored activities - rotating an analogue stick to turn a door handle, say.













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#### feature **Heavy Rain**

# Character creation

How Quantic Dream is bringing the cast of Heavy Rain to life

#### **Face off**

Every character, like 'Paco's Bodyguard' here, has a detailed design document. As well as an initial illustration the brief includes real life influences and other reference material.













There's a huge attention to detail throughout the design process. Not only are the bodyguard's clothes individually 'tailored' but real life garments are researched and referenced to ensure everything he wears is as authentic as possible. With so much effort poured into capturing realistic performances, every last fabric and accessory needs to be spot on.









Paco's Bodyguard.

Model **PlayStation** behaviour Relative unknown actor David Press was cast as Paco's Bodyguard. Quantic Dream uses numerous reference photos of each actor to help create the final in-game performer.



According to Quantic Dream's founder, David Cage (above), "The main thing we learnt with The Casting (a tech demo for Heavy Rain) is the importance of art direction. We had to think about everything in the scene according to the emotion we want to trigger. The tree branches moving outside because of the wind, the raindrops on the window – these details become very important in the final result."



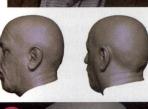


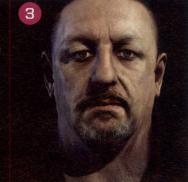


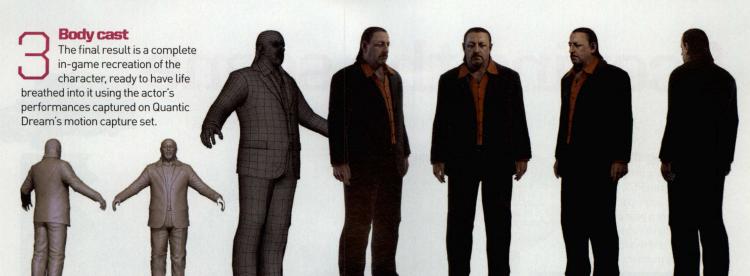




motion capture system.







Body of work The T-pose 1 and 2 has two functions. Firstly it exposes every surface of the model to ensure there are no featureless blanks spots. Secondly, it provides a useful, initial 'sync' position for the actor while technicians calibrate the motion capture equipment. Once set up, everything from body language to posture is translated onto the model, enabling the finished article 3 to move with the maximum believability.



#### **Finishing touches**

Facial motion capture is a separate process to full body capture and records far more information over a smaller area, capturing the subtlest motion or twitches.



#### In motion

Full motion capture uses infra-red cameras to capture the movement of reflective balls on the actors' suits. Sets and props are either made of wire or are full of holes to prevent any camera's view from being obscured.



When it comes to motion capture, there are several people on set. "I'm focused on the actors," says David Cage, "so I'm only concerned by the performance and what the scene is about. There's also a motion capture director who's making sure that, from a technical point of view, everything's fine."









#### feature **Heavy Rain**

# Scoping the scene

How Heavy Rain's atmospheric crime opening was created

Setting the scene

Before anything was created on PS3, Quantic Dream's ten-person art team spent a year and a half creating storyboards, illustrations and mood concepts for every key moment in the game.





**Location research** 

Two weeks were spent scouting locations on the East Coast of the US for images to inform the design of everything from buildings to plastic bags fluttering against fences.









Building blocks Early construction of the environment used simple, untextured models to block out the basic scene, plan camera angles and place props. These sets had to match the ones used by the actors during motion capture exactly.

#### Sketching it out

The various elements were then brought together, with the help of a Hollywood set designer, rough sketches placing objects in the scene and fixing the overall layout.

Set dressing The incredible volume of highly detailed props and objects were outsourced to external companies who use precise notes, references and schematics to quickly create the vast amount required.











# Entering the lair

The Lizard has yet to be revealed, but his home speaks volumes...

#### Grime scene

With a name like The Lizard it's a safe bet this character isn't one of the good guys. A glance at this concept art showing his apartment just confirms that first impression. It's a slimy, rotting collection of rooms, filled with filth, junk and decay.



AIR CONDITIONER Careful planning Architects worked with Quantic Dream to create believable indoor sets for Heavy Rain. GAS BOTTLE Each location had a CONCRETE series of precisely CONCRETE detailed schematics listing the contents and precise dimensions.

#### The worst toilet in the world

The research team's dedication to gathering the grimy reference material needed to create The Lizard's lair saw them entering more derelict buildings than they care to remember. The resulting collection of photos includes rotting food, dirt-encrusted sinks and the most disgusting loo this side of the Fratton Park away stand.















The finished apartment looks as realistic as it does because much of it - the toilet, rubbish and general filth - was referenced from existing locations. When applied to the bare model, The Lizard's lair really takes on that 'died in' look and feel.













#### feature Heavy Rain

# Secrets of the studio

Behind the scenes at Quantic Dream's studio in Paris



studio. But once inside it's a completely different story. They have their own 3D scanning system to recreate perfect virtual copies of the actors' faces and two motion capture studios; one for small scenes and a massive one for crowd work and complex set-pieces. "We've done mo-cap with the hero trying to find their way in a crowd," explains David Cage, "so we had one actor and then 20 people on set to push though." In total over 70 actors and stunt men have passed through the studio during the game's production. That might sound like a lot, but there are even more people behind the scenes. Over 200 internal staff have been working on Heavy Rain for three years while another 500 additional people working externally, creating props, sets or processing the huge volumes of motion capture data. However, while these shots seem to simply show the Paris team at work, closer inspection reveals a few juicy secrets...





Home from home This location is similar to the Taxidermist's house suggesting that, like the actor playing the killer in the tech demo, it could reappear in Heavy Rain under a different guise.

Sharp dresser
It's impossible to make out this character's name but he
appears to be a young man judging by his slight build. The
numerous images of sharp outfits and flashy sunglasses
suggest a wealthy person with expensive tastes.

Police presence It's a little hard to read but it looks like this character is 'Carter Blake – Police Inspector' and must be the older, bearded character we glimpsed briefly during the game's opening crime scene.

There are several origami birds here; it seems Quantic Dream considered several options before settling on the 'pajarita' design seen in the game's teaser poster. Not all of them were birds either – one looks like a cat.

**The private detective**Under the title 'Scott Shelby – The Private Detective' the actor in the photographs appears to be the same person who portrayed the murderer in the Taxidermist demo. This must be his real role in the main game.

#### In the detail

These images appear to show all the props associated with the private detective. Everything from desks, binoculars, chairs, clocks, cabinets and coffee pots have been referenced and catalogued.





#### In the mood for... **Lops** Whether you're upholding the law or tearing it apart, the PlayStation police are never far away Given that the amount of gunfire in your average shooter makes West Baltimore look like Eastbourne, it's no surprise to find the boys in blue ello, 'ello, elloing in your rear view mirror. But John Q Law has a shaky record on PlayStation. For every honest copper, there's a bad apple shooting up the barrel. Even the good guys can get pretty nasty when needs must and the captain's busting their chops. Hey, whatever gets the job done. Here are some of the finest, and worst, to wear the badge. Inspector Tequila (Stranglehold) Inspector Tequila actually does very little inspecting. His main strength is shooting suspects. Preferably while Cybil Bennett (Silent Hill 1) cartwheeling onto a banister in slo-mo, dual-wielding Berettas. When he runs Anyone in Silent Hill who's not the hero out of people to shoot in Hong Kong is doomed. Lead character Harry he moves to Chicago in pursuit meets Cybil early in the game where she of the mobsters who've helps out until she becomes possessed. kidnapped his family. She then tries guite hard to kill him. Depending on your mood and whether or not you found the aglaophotis herb, you can save her. Otherwise it's time for a bullet-themed retirement party. **Shibito Cop** (Siren: Blood Curse) The Shibito (zombie) cop is not your average bobby on the beat. Undead and cackling madly he's only interested in killing you. No matter how

much you hurt him he just keeps coming.
A severe shovelling to the head only makes him angrier, while a fence post through the gut just adds to his unstoppable psychopath allure.

PlayStation Official Magazine UK



#### back issues

Feed your obsession



#### Issue #019 June 2008

- MGS4 review & retrospective
- Race Driver Grid
- Street Fighter IV
- Resident Evil 5



#### Issue #0<u>20</u> July 2008

- 007: Quantum Of Solace
- Ultimate GTA IV guide
- Haze
- Far Cry 2



#### Issue #021 August 2008

- Killzone 2
- Future of shooters special
- David Jaffe interview
- LittleBigPlanet



#### Issue #022 September 2008

- Mirror's Edge
- Resident Evil 5
- Access All Areas @ E3
- Soulcalibur IV

# Back issues

Late to the party? There's no need to miss out...



#### Issue #023 October 2008

- Street Fighter special
- Mercenaries 2: World In Flames
- Hideo Kojima interview



#### Issue #024 November 2008

- LittleBigPlanet
- Operation Flashpoint 2: Dragon Rising
- **III** inFamous
- PES 2009



#### Issue #025 December 2008

- Resistance 2
- White Knight Chronicles
   LittleBigPlanet guide
- 42-page reviews blowout



#### Issue #026 Christmas 2008

- Prince Of Persia
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- Killzone 2
- PlayStation Network special

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January 2009



The OPM review setup



eview code is tested on hi-def and standard-de o ensure we know how games perform at both Tvs to ensure we know how games perform at both ends of the scale. Our HD setup is a 70" Sony Bravia with Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

# PlayStation.

Your essential guide to every new release

Trying economic times have meant two of the team have resorted to cutting their own hair. (This year's big look: day-release inmate.) And in the post-Christmas lull, we might have to esort to making our own games too. It's all a bit quiet out there. Mainly because, like greedy children who've eaten all their advent calendar chocolate in one go, we've already reviewed everything. So while other mags are only just getting to Prince Of Persia, to us it's old news.

What we do have is a review of the brilliant and elaborately named Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix, which is just as ruinously addictive as it was when we were teenagers, but like ex-girlfriends you run into at parties, it's also looking way prettier. We also rate the new Sonic - part return to form, bigger part sadness - sing along to chirpy PSP sequel Locoroco 2 and spend loads of time on PSN with Crash Commando and Burn Zombie Burn. Next month: our world exclusive review of Killzone 2. It's going to be huge.



#### SUPER SFII TURBO **HD REMIX**

Now with fake fireballs! Capcom's fighting classic returns with a sexy makeover



#### LOCOROCO 2

Daan-dah! Daan-dah-dah bingy bah ding dah... We've fallen in love with the weird smiling blobs again. Jump you fool!



#### SONIC UNLEASHED

Like a spiky blue lover we just keep taking back, Sonic is definitely on his final chance this time round. See if he can win us over...

#### How we score our reviews...

#### Essential Instant classic that's as close as it gets to PlayStation perfection

Outstanding

#### Highly recommended, and an investment you won't regret.

Very good

Good Enjoyable, but with definite roor

#### for improvement. Rent it first

Reasonable A decent offering, but one that only satisfies in places

A game that is both fun and frustrating in equal measur

#### Below average

Too flawed to be anything more than a brief curiosity Poor

#### A seriously flawed game with

Awful A disgrace to the bargain bin. Avoid it as you would a bullet.

#### Horrific

Buy this shocker and watch your console self-combust in protest.

#### GOLD AWARD **PlayStation**

#### **Our highest** accolade

The gold award is presented to any game that we feel demonstrates significant innovation, near flawless gameplay, great graphics and profound appeal.



#### Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix



Undisputed champ

# Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix

#### Goodness gracious, great balls of fire



hether you prefer ritual sacrifice, birthday wishes or praying to a big wizard in the sky, it's a rare day that you get exactly what you asked for. But for gamers of a certain age that's what SSFII HD Remix will be. Because the truth is that, beyond hardcore fans who breathe spinning piledrivers, most of us didn't much care for the Street Fighter III or Street Fighter Alpha offshoots, with their increasingly bloated and unlovable line-ups. No, what we wanted, what we in fact demanded, was the same old Super Street Fighter II Turbo – only with prettier pictures. And it

turns out those black cockerels didn't die in vain, because that's precisely what Capcom has delivered on PSN.

Graphics first, then. Every art asset in the game - characters, animation and backdrops - has been redrawn in gorgeous, chunky, manga-inflected 1080p. That part of the project was handled by the team at Udon Entertainment (which also does the Street Fighter comics) and is a total triumph. The artists have managed to refresh the graphics for 16:9 hi-def displays without sacrificing any of SFII's inimitable style and charm. There are some lovely little flourishes too - like the heat haze off Ken's flaming dragon punch and motion blur on Honda's hundredhand slap. What there aren't, though, are any extra frames of animation - because that would mess with the combo



Score

It's a decade old but SFII holds its own against the mighty Calibur IV. Poor old MK looks on in despair. system's Quartz timing. And that, obviously, would be *madness*.

#### We can rebuild it

So to the gameplay, of which there are two flavours to sample. 'Original' is precisely as you remember it from the heady days of the mid-'90s. (Britpop, be honest now... a bit rubbish.) Within a few rounds the muscle memory starts to return, and getting reacquainted with your cheesiest, nastiest combos proves to be an oddly comforting feeling. Within an hour or so I was stringing Vega's leg sweep into Crystal Flash into Izuna drop into another leg sweep and colleagues were turning blue with fury.

The genius of SFII – and it really is genius – resides in the balance.
Controlled by a skilled player, every character has a deep and varied

#### Five remixed moves



#### RYU'S FAKE FIREBALL

Do a quarter circle towards your enemy into jumping then hitting him with a Dragon Punch.



#### **DHALSIM'S YOGA**

simultaneously to activate, rather than three. Good news for our ever-growing RSI problem.



#### CHUN LI'S SPINNING BIRD KICK



#### HONDA'S SUPER TORPEDO

The jab version of fatty's Flying Headbutt travels less distance but can knock out fireballs. Still the Camembert of fighter choices, as



#### SAGAT'S TIGER KNEE

Having his bony leg driven into your face will now always knock opening you up for more cheap hits as you bounce around in the



Pretty boy Spaniard Vega (right) is the ultimate show-off's character thanks to his aerial specials



Russian bear Zangief remains a 'specialist' choice as he's reliant on his powerful throws.



■ Designed by Capcom's US office, rubbish Dee Jay (left) remains a hate figure on the SFII scene.

repertoire of moves which, timed right, will trump your opponent's attack. It's like rock, paper, scissors but with a hundred different types of scissor. The result is matches that ebb and flow as you test each other's defences, probing for weakness, exploiting mistakes, and revelling in the microsecond margin between victory and endless shame for your entire family.

The new 'HD Remix' mode, meanwhile, contains a dizzying array of little tweaks. All the characters have had changes made to the damage, range, and recovery time of their attacks - check out the full breakdown at snipurl. com/5gayg. Most of the rebalancing will only be noticeable to total SFII nerds, but I did find that one of my (cheesiest,



been nerfed. One problem for anyone raised on the SNES version is that the Dual Shock's stiffer D-pad isn't as suited to rolling your thumb through quarter circles, making specials less comfortable to execute. But there's always the option of buying a stick, and be grateful you don't have to endure the 360's fat Fisher Price D-pad.

On the subject of difficulty, the package feels built for returning fans. Even on the normal setting the CPU puts up brutal resistance. The hope is, of course, that the real juice will be found online. However, with no servers available at time of writing we were unable to test the network mode, and given that no game is immune from lag there's a very real worry as to how one that relies on PlayStation.

frame-perfect timing will work. (Or more likely: won't.) However, even offline I noticed some odd glitches where blows didn't seem to connect. But it was very rare, and the developer is currently



#### Name Nathan Ditum Angle A new challenger

barring miniscule changes, exactly the same, and 15 years on I'm not sure that's

#### Best for...

investigating. We'll let you know more about the online side next month, but even if you're limited to playing a

> friend in the same room this feels like an essential download. Not for empty nostalgia, but because the brilliant core gameplay remains deep like the Mariana Trench.

Go get. Tim Clark





#### Sonic Unleashed





■ Use the Werehog's extend-o-arms to throw enemies. Or even better, just don't buy this mess.



Split personality

Sonic Unleashed

#### Guaranteed to leave you feeling blue



et's start with the good news. 20% of Sonic Unleashed is *brilliant*.

If you've been waiting for Sega's hog to go back to 2D basics, then the new, side-on, super fast '2.5D' bits won't disappoint. Rings are hoovered up before you've even spotted them. Blasting through enemies with twitchy taps of quickly becomes an always-fulfilling instinct. And watching pretty levels fly by in beautiful motion blur is delightful every

Sonic game provided highs like this. Yes!
And now for the soul destroying bit.
The other 80% of Sonic Unleashed is an overflowing cauldron of bad design, tedious enemies, disastrous control issues and endless, needless talk. (A major component in the game is chatting to bystanders about stuff you really couldn't care less about. WHY?!) And as good as it looks when that motion blur

time. Not since Sonic Adventure has a

kicks in, the visuals are a very mixed bag. There's some wonderfully lavish CG video, including an incredible opening in which Eggman essentially destroys the planet, setting up the storyline whereby Sonic must travel the globe to restore the power of the chaos emeralds. But there's also a *lot* of pixellated scenery and some ugly cut-scenes that put paid to the notion that, for all their gameplay flaws, Sonic games are always pretty.

#### Dark times

The sea change for Unleashed is the introduction of Sonic's alter-ego, the Werehog. Each of the planet's seven regions acts as a hub from which you begin levels or converse with the locals (again: ARGH!). By walking up to an hourglass within that region (or moving the sun on the in-game map), Sonic can turn day into night and become



#### Timeline Sonic series lowlights



#### Sonic Drift Game Gear

A bit like Mario Kart. But with crap courses. And crap handling. And only four characters. So, just to reiterate: Crap.

#### 2000



Sonic Shuffle Dreamcast

Sonic's attempt at a party game. Dull, card-based gameplayhorrendous loading times = infinite fail.

#### 2005



#### Shadow The Hedgehog PS2

Sonic's dark alter-ego wields a Glock and kills civilians... then turns out to be the good guy. Booooo!

#### anni



#### Sonic Riders

Shallow hybrid of racing and, erm, snowboarding, that was fun. For exactly 12 minutes

#### 2007



#### Sonic The Hedgehog PS3

Ruined by terrible camerawork and levels specifically designed to ready for this? – STOP YOU GOING FAST, What?

# reviewPS3

Sonic Unleashed

half wolf, half hedgehog. Instead of the speedy Sonic acts, the slower Werehog ones combine puzzling, platforming, and combat. Completing them enables you to power up in areas like strength and combos, but in practice the waves of brainless enemies are so incessant that even after you've unlocked an extensive catalogue of moves, you often find yourself pummelling (A), (A), (a) endlessly just to stay alive. And the puzzles - move blocks and levers, find objects to place on switches, thereby holding doors open - are so heavily recycled from other games that even The Simpsons Game's send up of puzzlers did them better. Sling in the fact that Werehog acts take 20-30 minutes compared to two-ten for Sonic ones, and you have a dish that fuses limitless

#### Out of control

Not that the Sonic acts are without problems. While the 2.5D bits are outstanding, there aren't enough of them: Unleashed is predominantly 3D and suffers as a result. The game's structure encourages you to explore levels for collectibles (like sun and

sadness with blind, uncontrollable rage.





Despite his impressive speed, Sonic gets left chewing dirt by both sackboy and Ratchet.

moon medallions that you have to find to open up later acts) and grab rings compulsively, but controlling Sonic from behind is so stupidly imprecise when he isn't moving at speed that just getting him to walk in a straight line is a Sisyphean task. And while the camera is much more reliable than it was in dire previous effort Sonic The Hedgehog, speeding

round corners and dashing from side to side is still horribly disorientating.

It's hard to see who exactly Sega is looking to appeal to here. Even by Sonic's standards, the storyline is so preposterous



The platforming borrows from Prince Of Persia and Tomb Raider - play them, not this.

that you have to assume Unleashed is aimed at the under-12s, particularly with a disgustingly cheery purple idiot called Chip - who might be the most annoying sidekick in any game ever - hovering on your shoulder during the hub parts; yet the Werehog elements are so banal and poorly cribbed from God Of War that making anyone play them is like digital waterboarding. The end result is an aimless mess, albeit one that

PlayStation.

offers up tantalising glimpses of what could have been. One of the Trophies on offer here is entitled 'Still Broken', and as a twoword summary of Sonic's latest outing, it couldn't be more fitting. Ben Wilson

KONAMI

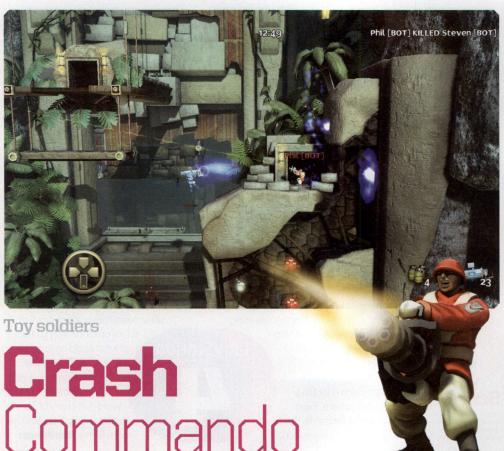


# Need to get away?





#### reviewPS3 Crash Commando



# Commando

War is hell, but also hella fun

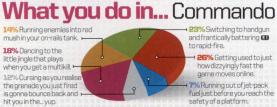
f there's something better to do on PSN than jet-packing around cartoon-crisp platform battlegrounds squishing enemies in a dinky tank and accidentally blowing yourself to pieces with a rebounding grenade, then I haven't found it yet. Crash Commando is bright, inventive, and fast, and above all totally geared toward uncomplicated fun.

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Think of it a bit like a 2D Team Fortress, with opposing teams of red and blue (Grunts and Jarheads) duking it out across scrolling, multi-tiered levels. There's no story to speak of, and only a bare bones single-player mode to occupy lonely soldiers (it's really just a 20-mission training sequence populated with bots), because the real juice is in the 12-man online multiplayer.

The whole thing is built with frantic



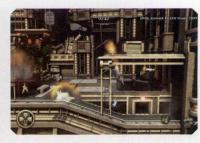


multi-man mayhem in mind. The physics are reminiscent of the classic Worms games - an arcadey mix of bouncing bombs and rat-a-tat machine-gun fire tracing visibly across the screen. It'd be family-friendly if it wasn't for the fact that every death is marked by a fat, red explosion of meat. Actually making people dead is simple - choose a primary and secondary weapon, grab some grenades and press fire stupidly fast.

#### Oh what a lovely war

The only tricky thing is getting used to the slightly fiddly aiming, which takes a few matches. A blue line tracing the course of whatever you're firing - rockets, grenades, bullets - streaks out from your little man, and can be guided with the right stick. It's sensitive, but soon makes sense - especially once you've figured out which is your weapon of choice.

The default machine gun, for instance, takes a while to do serious damage but does allow for scattershot accuracy. On the other hand my favourite, the grenade launcher, has a much slower rate of fire but



Surviving for more than a minute feels like a massive achievement in the midst of all the bang.



Objective-based games are more tactical, but still end up in big, messy piles of man bits.



■ Vehicles kick ass, bringing fat firepower to battles, even though they only go left and right.

doesn't have to score a direct hit to kill it bounces and ricochets off walls and floors, so you can pre-empt an enemy or even just fire one in his general direction and pray to the great munitions gods.

And this is where the brilliance of the jet-pack comes in. Every player can launch themselves into the air by holding , but the quickly recharging fuel gauge only lasts a few seconds. Essentially, everyone can fly, but not for long, so the battle becomes all about out-manoeuvring your opponents, conserving just enough energy to zip away from their attacks, or timing a grenade so it bounces up to meet them as they're forced to descend.

There are tons of other great touches, too. The maps each have two 'sides' joined by doorways - it's still 2D, but you can see the other side in the distance and they give an impression of depth.

**PlayStation** 

There are also vehicles to drive - tanks, jeeps, rockets - and loads of pickups to play tactical cat-and-mouse around. making this the best fun we've had on PSN for

ages. Nathan Ditum

Retro regent

# Prince Of Persia Classic

Platforming royalty gets HD remake

ose-tinted specs are banned here on the forward-thinking OPM, but I secretly enjoy the punishment/ purity of old games compared to the save-anywhere, hand-holding of the next-gen. Identical to the version released on XBLA early last year, this HD visual makeover of Jordan Mechner's classic side-scrolling platformer – and

■The original Prince Of Persia has had a Sands Of Time reskin.





inspiration for Ubisoft's modern-era POP – tries to fuse friendly and fierce. And while the results are a bit muddled, Classic is still worth the £7.99 entry fee. Just.

Reskinned in 2003's Sands Of Time livery, the Prince and his surroundings leist look super pretty in hi-def, complete with trademark subtle animations. He even gets a few new moves, including a nifty but largely pointless backwards somersault. Despite this, a few mid-level checkpoints and overly 'look at me!' gate triggers, however, Persia redux is as ripe with molar-grinding insta-deaths and cruel scimitars to the

kidneys as it ever was.

Problem is, while the spike
traps, loose tiles and blade barriers
genuinely test your skill, the frustratingly
leisurely combat animations and
capricious parrying mean the
swordfighting does little more than test
your patience. To be fair, it's not a deal
breaker, but with Uncharted's truly

sumptuous themic reinterpretation of Classic's traps and scraps gameplay currently available on amazon for a tenner, nostalgia really is the biggest draw here.

Paul Fitzpatrick















Download GTI Club+ from the PlayStation®Network for only £9.99.







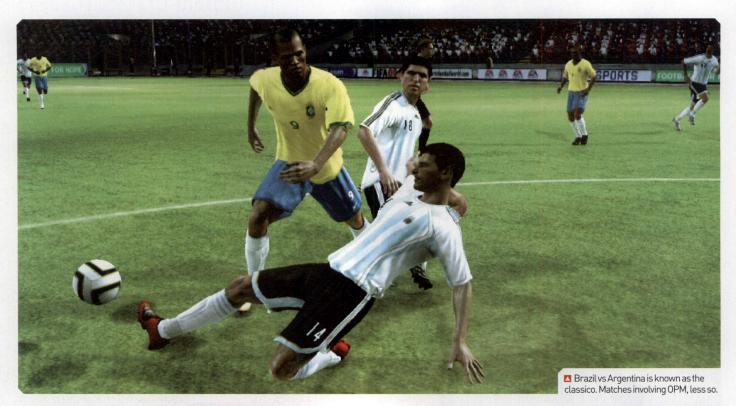








#### **online**promotion





OPIVI slips to first defeat





ooks like it could be a rollercoaster season for the OPM FIFA 09 Online Challenge team. Having opened with a solid 2-1 victory last month, our latest performance saw us stumble to a messy 4-0 defeat at the hands of a scratch matchmaking side – us as Arsenal, them as [spit] Chelsea. Shambles might be a strong word, but how else to describe a performance which saw Robin Van Persie dismissed after four minutes following a crackerjack challenge on the halfway line [Chappers11, we may never forgive you]?

To be fair to Chappers, he wasn't the only one who saw red – Liverpool101 and our very own Nath were also dismissed, as OPM finished the game with just seven men on the pitch. A bit of a disgrace, then, although voices on the team were quick to insist that lag may have played a part.

If your team wants to take a crack at a tired, struggling OPM side then head on over to gamesradar.com/fifa09online challenge to register your details. See you online. We'll be the ones in an awkward pre-match huddle.





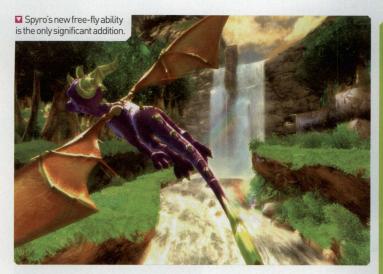




#### Sign up to play our FIFA 09 side now

gamesradar.com/fifa09onlinechallenge

The Legend Of Spyro/Japan



Happy flapping

# **The Legend Of Spyro**Dawn Of The Dragon

PSI's purple-headed monster is back. Again

hat the?! How is he still not dead? Or grown up with a real job and a mortgage?

No. In all this time, all that's happened is Spyro has gone from being a fat ball of purple living in a child-friendly fairyland to an awkward adolescent in a slightly better rendered fairyland. This time around, Spyro's world is teetering on the edge of apocalypse – but, higher stakes aside, it's the same old story.

So: fun? [Drum roll]

#### Flight of fancy

Not hugely. The gameplay suffers from a slew of platformer problems: a sadistic camera, by-the-numbers combat and tediously traditional ledge-hopping. But the weirdest thing is that great chunks of the platforming are rendered utterly obsolete by the fact that - like Clark Kent in Smallville - Spyro's creators have finally conceded that he has to start flying at some point, or people will ask some tough questions. That means barring a couple of occasions where strong winds makes flight impossible, you can flap over platforms, rather than jumping like a last-gen chump. PlayStation.

This is a double-edged sword. Obviously, negating the purposelybuilt levels is madness, but flying is also really good





▲ To defeat this terrifying beast you have to... Slap his hand? Oh come on, Team Spyro.



▲ Your dragon breath can be upgraded. Just drink a pot of coffee and smoke 20 Bensons.

fun. When you first spread your wings and glide out over a waterfall, skimming the breeze as uplifting strings play, it's magical. In fact, if

there was more of this, Dawn would feel like much more than just the latest in a seemingly endless line of sequels. Open world Spyro though? Maybe next

time... Kim Richards

# Japan Watch

This month's overseas action in a nutshell

#### Macross Ace Frontier

Format PSP Pub Bandai Namco Subtitles No

I usually base purchasing decisions for this column on how quickly IT fires off a cease and desist email once I hit the game's (normally filthy) website. But not with this PSP-flattering new mecha combat game. It features fearsome bots from the entire 26-year canon and not a flash of knicker in sight.









#### Chuumon Shiyouze! Oretachi no Sekai

Format PSP Pub Global A Entertainment Subtitles No



This clever new role-player tasks your character to build his own RPG quests, buying land, renting monsters to roam it, and hiding bejewelled trinkets in dark caves before sending unwitting fools out to their doom. Kind of like corporate retreat management with foaming mead and disembowelling.

#### **Exotic Boxart Of The Month**



#### Sangokushi XI with Power-Up Kit

So this is what illustrators of children's bibles get up to between jobs. 'Mummy, why is Jesus throwing shuriken at that man?'



#### Devil Summoner: Kuzunoha Raidou

videogame boxart that perfectly captures the tinderbox tension an instant before the stabbing (or confused kissing) begins.



#### Umewaza Ykari no Yasashi Igo

What's more depressing: the calculated laziness of this boxart or the fact that she'll be down to her underwear before the third button press?

# reviewPSP Tom Clancy's Endwar



Commend performance

# Tom Clancy's Endwar

Apocalyptic conflict gets shrunk to fit

s far as strategic decisions go, setting out to evoke the spirit of the PS3 version's voice-controlled wargasm on PSP, rather than trying to fudge the actual technology, was the smart move. So gone is barking commands over a headset as heroic cameras swoop over military units in real-time. In its place Ubisoft has created a Clancy-themed, turn-based isometric battlefield sim that's so sternly 'reminiscent' of Nintendo's excellent Advance Wars it's quite a surprise to find the game doesn't come bundled with a clip-on second screen and touch stylus. Still, if you're going to stalk another series, it might as well be a classic.

098

Narratively, Endwar stands shoulder-to-shoulder with its next-gen cousin, delivering a paranoid, near-future tale of a resurgent Soviet bear playing Europe and the US off against each other to trigger World War 3. But that, and the fact that you can play as any of the three factions, is where the family

#### Did you know?

The Endwar novel, written by a genre hack under he pseudonym David Michaels, is actually based on Ubisoff's game rather than the other way around, and depicts events unfolding on the Canadian front of a near-future WW3.



resemblance ends. With no multiple satellite uplink nodes to seize or WMDs to deploy, missions no longer seesaw with the unpredictability of those in the PS3 game. Happily, though, the pumped up rock-paper-scissors gameplay and chess-like manoeuvres provide ample opportunities for strategic noodling.

#### Moving out

A typical skirmish will see the
Europeans facing off against the
Russians on a gridded map
containing a neutral base.
Each 'cycle' is divided into a
movement phase and an attack
phase. During the first phase you
advance your units, plug gaps in defences
and task friendly bases to create
new units. You can also
deploy infantry from land,
sea and air transports.
There are several tactical

modifiers to bear in mind, here: wooded and built-up 'squares' provide a defensive boost



■ Endwar on PSP wisely skips the PS3 version's tech-heavy innovations and focuses on strategy.



Combat cycles have two parts: a movement phase and an attack phase. 'Sit still, damn you!'



to infantry, heavy artillery units need a rest cycle between moving and attacking, submarines are invisible to the opposing army while in deep water, and it's possible to slow down enemy units by flanking them with your own. With movement complete you then select targets and sit back to watch the split-screen animations of your brave lads getting the upper hand, or (quite often) their asses handed back to them.

There are two elements that raise Endwar's gameplay from breezy fun to minor obsession. The first is surprisingly aggressive enemy AI that rapidly schools you in the folly of just steaming in and hoping for the best. The second is an XP system that boosts units' stats with every successful attack. So neglect any enemy unit for long and, when you finally come to fight them, you risk facing off against an elite force of battle-hardened vets rather than soft, new recruits. It's a clever touch, forcing you to keep an eye on the whole battlefield and not just

emerging flashpoints. It also consolidates PSP Endwar's status as a worthy partner to the PS3 version, rather than

merely a lower-specced inferior alternative.

Paul Fitzpatrick

Claq/Music

### SingStar Abba

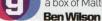


That's right, make a face at the magazine and pretend you're not interested.

Abba? Abba! Like you'd be caught singing along to something so embarrassingly retro and camp. Now stick the disc in your PS3 and cycle through the songs. Go on. Note how you're helpless to prevent your foot tapping along to Gimme Gimme Gimme. Feel a lump in your throat as When All Is Said And Done plays out. See how your missus blushes for you as you stagger through Dancing Queen. And then drop the façade and belt out The Winner Takes It All like



your life depends on it. No other way is possible. In terms of doing what it says on the box, SingStar Abba simply can't be faulted - 25 massive pop songs fit for any occasion: parties, weddings, solo nights in with a nice bottle of Chardonnay and a box of Maltesers. Wait, what?



### SingStar Vol 3

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Sonv



SingStar remains one of Sony's greatest success stories, but this latest

collection only underlines the obsolescence of the disc-based version now that we can pick and choose from the online riches of the SingStore. Vol 3's eclectic tracklist means you'll find six or seven tracks to belt out (read: ruin) whatever your tastes, but, as a standalone disc costing 25 quid, it feels all over the place. Is a Fall Out Boy fan really going to want to sing Kate



Bush's Babooshka? Who thought Jacko's Billie Jean would sit well alongside Happy Mondays' Kinky Afro? Decent as an introduction to PS3 karaoke, otherwise stick with the Store. Ben Wilson

### Disney Sing It

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Disney Interactive



Say you're the suit tasked with overseeing a Disney version of SingStar. Do you

do the obvious thing and retain the simple, widely understood scoring system from Sony's series? Or do you swing for the bleachers and introduce a new, Guitar Hero-style system that awards multipliers for hitting a chain of notes, thereby confusing your target audience and ensuring that winning is more down to luck than talent? Because someone (we're guessing Goofy) bafflingly decided to do the latter here. Meaning that, despite a



tracklist packed with sickeningly happy hits from Camp Rock, High School Musical, and some plastic-smiled teens you'll never have heard of, the only guarantee this brings is tears before bedtime. And that's with two adults playing... Ben Wilson



Essential tunes to download this month

#### Telepathe Dance Mother

Dreamy synthesiser pop where club beats meld with tribal rhythms and interlocking vocals in a way that ought to charm TV On The Radio fans out there - and not just because it features TV's production wizard David Sitek. myspace.com/telepathe



# **The Wombats**Is This Christmas?

The Wombats join Slade in the ranks of bands with an Xmas single under their belt. Here they spruce up their anthemic punk-pop with horns and sleigh bells, but Back To The Future on TV and boozy rows make this a Yule you'll recognise. myspace.com/thewombatsuk



#### Solange Sandcastle Disco

Format Track ETA Out now Price £0.79

Beyonce's little sis plucks this Motown-tinted pop gem from recent album Sol-Angel And The Hadley St Dreams. Sol hasn't quite got the imperious, fembot delivery of her sister, but makes up for it here with her sunny, soft delivery over a breezy '60s-influenced pop stomp.

myspace.com/solange



#### **review**PSP

Locoroco 2

































Blob army

Who ate all the fruit?



elcome to the epicentre of cuteness. This is a game where a singing blob hops on chubby penguins, floats on dandelions and rides clouds through the sky. If they found a way to make pandas the size of hamsters and then dressed them up in little bonnets, it still wouldn't be as cute as Locoroco 2.

But underneath this seguel's soft and cuddly exterior lies an addictive puzzler. The basic setup hasn't changed. Your little blob jumps around a magical land, eating red fruits to add extra blobs to increase its size, while taking on the evil Mojas - creatures who look like big

scribbles. Sounds ferociously Japanese? Don't worry, once in your hands it's surprisingly easy to get involved with.

Part of the original Locoroco's success was down to its thicko-proof controls - and they haven't been tampered with. So you navigate your way around the slopes, pools, drops and spiky hazards with three simple buttons: the two shoulder buttons and **②**. The shoulders tip the world left and right hold them down and your Locoroco bounces upwards. Hit @ and it will split apart into tiny separate blobs or recombobulate into a single monster sphere again. And being Locorocos, they make a funny noise while they're doing it. In fact, they make funny noises all the time, singing happy nonsense songs until you feel like you're watching CBeebies with Blake Fielder-Civil.

#### Cleaning crew

The premise is as simple as the controls. Mojas are polluting everything with dark

clouds and terrorising the Locoroco world. In each stage the only goal is to get to the end, but along the way you'll clean up the clouds, find Miu Miu men (tiny folk who live alongside the Locorocos) and bash Mojas. There are collectables, like the Locoroco currency of pickories, and musical notes that can 'level up' stages so they have more goodies scattered around. You find different coloured Locorocos too, who each have their own style of song.

It might sound like a walk in the hallucinogenic park, but the right path isn't always obvious. There are secret areas where you can pick up extra pickories or fruits, and you'll need to experiment to find new routes. Want to

# Baby sick Cute-o-meter

#### What you do in... Locoroco 2







You know the old saying... time flies when you're a tiny, singing lump of joy.

reach that high platform? You'll have to hop up and down on that stripy elephant-like creature until it spews rainbows from its trunk. Obviously. Or you'll come across parts to attach to your Locoroco. I bounced on the top of what looked like a smiling piece of broccoli, and then used its head to crash through some rocks. All this and you need to look out for enemies. As well as the Mojas, there are carnivorous plants that live in the jungle levels, spikes to avoid, and bosses to battle via the medium of strategic bouncing. It's a rich enough world to keep you playing right up until the end, at which point you'll want another go to see what you missed first time round.

#### Mini adventures

And that's just the main show.
There are some brilliant mini-games to uncover as you play. Like the Locoroco-infested version of whack-a-mole, or Loco Chuppa, where bird-like creatures spit



■ Just us, or is the snowman channelling Danny Day-Lewis in There Will Be Blood?

you through the level. The only one that felt pointless was a racing game – you couldn't participate, just bet on the outcome. It felt like watching a screensaver and I got bored after ten seconds. Why not just let me race?

So, there's not much change to the original Locoroco formula, but when it comes to something as original as this, there doesn't need to be. There are a few tweaks – the 25 levels felt a little tougher than the first game's, and a little crazier, like when you're moving through the insides

of a giant sleeping penguin. It's enough to make it feel new and shiny again, and well worth buying. Plus: singing blobs! What's not to like?

**Rachel Penny** 

### **Blu**Movies

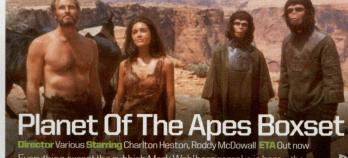
HD films to feed your next-gen disc player



#### The Matrix Trilogy

Director Larry and Andy Wachowski Starring Keanu Reeves ETA Out now The Matrixes (Matrices?) in all their inconsistency. The first one is still

inconsistency. The first one is still amazing – full of men in leather having teenage existential dramas, but full of incredible action scenes. The other two have even more action, but are drowned in ballbag philosophising.



Director Various Staining Charlton Heston, Roody McDowall ETA Out now Everything except the rubbish Mark Wahlberg remake is here – the still good but definitely aging original, the brilliantly bleak anti-nuke Beneath The Planet Of The Apes, the so-so Escape From The Planet Of The Apes and the trailing off a bit Conquest and Battle.



#### Hellboy 2

**Director** Guillermo del Toro **Starring** Ron Perlman, Selma Blair **ETA** Out now 101

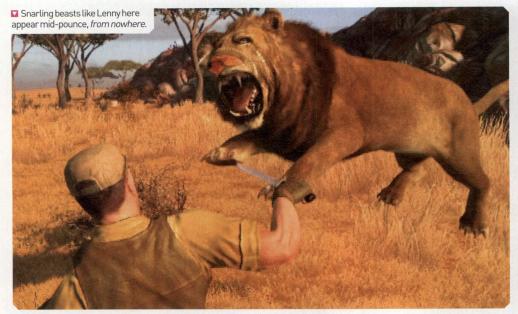
Bigger and better supernatural sequel. Not only does Hellboy have to stop a creepy ancient prince – from '80s pop band Bros, eeek! – waking his mega army, but he's having relationship issues with Selma Blair's beautifully spiky Liz. A bit like The Hills then, only with weird things in jars and spontaneous combustion.





#### reviewPS3

#### Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2009





# **Cabela's** Dangerous Hunts 2009

#### Kicking Mother Nature's ass since 1998

he lioness begins to go cold at my feet, a high-velocity bullet hole between her sad eyes, as Dangerous Hunts proves that porn isn't the only hollow thrill you can have in which hard-faced men with bad moustaches perform reprehensible acts linked by an irrelevant plot and zero-budget production values. By any reasonable criteria, this is a bag of balls. The graphics are emphatically below the best that PS2 can achieve, while the gameplay stutters and lurches with an unpredictably that suggests it's being finished frantically, live, and piped down the broadband as you play. And bear in mind, this is coming from someone who has no problem with Dangerous Hunts' subject matter whatsoever. Oh, grow up. Assuming you've played your fair share of games, you've probably shot,



exploded, flayed and mashed enough virtual humans to fill the Millennium Stadium twice over, so if the thought of shooting jaguars out of trees gets you all squeamish, then you're lost to me.

#### Fur cry

No, the frustration comes from playing a game that doesn't seem to realise that it's squandering one of the most original, untapped videogame experiences out there. Whereas other first-person shooters tend to cast you as the prey - the lone warrior facing long odds against an enemy with superior weaponry - Dangerous Hunts does the opposite. So where other shooters routinely send peril your way, this plonks you in a wilderness with an elusive (but deadly) quarry to track and take down. Pick up its tracks and you're forced to cover your own as you stalk it through the countryside. PlayStation. Make a noise, let your scent carry downwind and it's all for nothing. And even if you do these things successfully, unless your eye is good, you risk

blundering onto Gentle Ben,



☑ Ironically, if you're really good at this game, this is as exciting as the graphics get. Lucky you.



In an attempt to up the thrills the game offers a series of arenas packed with nature's nutters.



"Now just remember, Flint, he's much more scared of you than you are of - not the neck!"

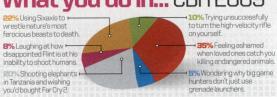
say, and getting slashed, bitten or trampled underfoot. Admit it: if this were turned into an inverted stealth game, with you, a guard, carefully, cautiously hunting an enemy spy around a military base, it'd be incredible. Or at least not as awful.

However, oblivious to this stealthy germ of brilliance in its lap, the developer has instead opted to amp the hell out of the hunting. And so you get tons of hysterically awful quick-time melee fights - I've wrestled more hairy beasts than Triple H - and a stupendously wrong-brained attempt at a plot that sees your hunter - Flint Abrahams rescuing the passengers of a downed plane from piranhas and jaguars, killing the entire cast of The Lion King as it menaces a Safari camp, and generally saving a jaw-dropping succession of national stereotypes from their own wildlife. It is, in short, all sorts of

wrong. And yet, well, let's just say I've mailed our copy to Hideo Kojima, so if Metal Gear Solid 5 turns out to be the best game of the decade you'll know who to thank, right?

Paul Fitzpatrick

#### What you do in... CBH 2009





nd so we bid a weary 'hello, again' to the seemingly endless Armored Core series and its less than red hot bot-on-bot action. Thirteenth time around, little has changed since PS1 was in its prime. You track enemies on your radar until you get a weapon lock, fire until greeted with a messy explosion, then zoom off and repeat. And that's about it. It's mixed with some bigger battles against vast enemy forts, and there's some gladiatorial one-on-one action to be had against rival mech pilots. But however dressed up things are, it's impossible to get past the fact that the combat just isn't very interesting, which is a big minus given that the game revolves around giant flying robots tearing panels off each other.

#### Mech daddy

It's not even technically impressive. The environments don't feel like they were designed so much as modelled using Duplo bricks in a sandpit. Worse still, for a game in which there's usually precious little going on, it's got a bogglingly tightfisted framerate – which is particularly disastrous for the target lock-on.

Weirdly, while the gameplay stagnates, the mech customisation options are excellent. It's sort of like a Gundam version of Gran Turismo, with tons of weapons, body parts and





☐ The game often feels like having a migraine while scaffolding falls about your ears.



Once you've created your bespoke death droid you've seen the best of Armored Core.

accessories available. You really can build a unique murderbot, with every last detail tweaked to your personal specifications – 'Hmm, twin plasma cannons in raspberry, I think'. It's properly absorbing too. So much so

**PlayStation** 

that you're likely to spend far, far longer building than you are fighting. As endorsements go, that's like buying a car because you'll enjoy changing its spark plugs.

**Dave Houghton** 



# Straight to bargain bin

#### With Nathan Ditum



Getting angry at **Bratz: Girlz Really Rock** is a bit like that woman in the parable being cross at the snake for biting her. Yes, it's a frost-hearted vision of hell as an endless popularity contest for tweenage girls swathed in pink clothes and cheap makeup with freakishly identical bodies that will be utterly impossible for its impressionable target audience to reconcile with real life. What did you expect? And gameplay wise, yes, it's a broken heap of idiot

physics and horribly misconceived mini-games. But again, it was always going to be this way. Equally, though, I bloody hate snakes, and I've also got a two year-old daughter, and I'm sick of having to swat this kind of exploitative rubbish away from her like fat seagulls on Brighton beach. In short, not my game of the year.

By contrast, the ever-expanding stable of horsey games on PS2 (I nearly got four in this month, and was going to rename the column 'Straight to the knacker's yard') feels wholesome, educational, and sternly reassuring like wearing a pair of one-size-too-small jodhpurs. Like Girlz Really Rock, these games are also aimed at young girls, but less in a 'go spend all your money in Accessorize' sort of way and more in a 'you love ponies and you can stroke one in



this slightly shabby game' way. Just like **Tim Stockdale's Riding Star**, which is totally unremarkable in terms of graphics, handling and everything else, but does let you ride a horse along a shore by a lighthouse under a grey sky beside lush green hills. Sigh.

PlayStation.2

CLEVER KIDS
PONY WORLD

Less good ('good' being deeply relative here) is Clever Kids Pony World, which doesn't let you ride a horse at all. Instead, it's a weird quiz hosted by a floating robot head that consists of slightly disturbing jigsaws ('See if you can put this Shetland Pony back together'... 'Mummy!') and questions about the differences between a Welsh Cob and a Welsh Mountain Pony (the answer? One of them is drawn ever so slightly more like a sanitorium

inmate's therapeutic watercolour than the other). All of which is pleasantly educational, but rendered maddeningly unplayable because the floaty robot greets every transition to a new screen with a fresh ejaculation of whirring beeps and squeaks, which sound like a liquored-up R2-D2 on his way home from a lock-in.

# Abomination of the month

The most depressing thing about Margot's Word Brain – apart from the fact it only includes six games, all of which could be played on a mobile phone or, in the event of a prolonged power cut or



you living in the past, on paper – isn't that it made me feel stupid, but exactly how it managed to do so. Of the six games on offer I got scores in the low hundreds for the five that represent traditional, sedate mental exercises – stuff like word searches, anagrams and Scrabble-like word runs. Then I got over four thousand points on the clearly-just-put-into-the-game-so-grandma-doesn't-win-every-round Hyper Txt, which simply asks you to spell words on a mobile phone interface. I mean, Jesus. I could've been somebody.



### reviewPS3/PSP

Burn Zombie Burn/Round-up

Horde game

Burn Zombie Burn

Still sad about Left 4 Dead? Try these PSN rot-bags

peedy or slow? That's the question tearing apart the zombie-loving community right now. Traditionalists argue that the classic zombie shuffle is timeless – clumsy but



Setting zombies on fire is more like stress relief than gaming. The repetitiveness of it is enough to turn *you* into a zombie

relentless; a terrifying metaphor for the decrepitude that awaits us all. Modernists reckon that zombies are like broadband internet – once you've seen how fast things can move, you can't ever go back. Burn Zombie Burn neatly resolves this dispute by providing both in its Super Smash TV-style arcade chaos.

The vast majority of its walking dead are your basic Romero-era shufflers: arms outstretched, easy cannon fodder. Occasionally, though, you get a sprinter come out of the pack without warning, and by golly you'd better be ready with the shotgun. There's also a neat dilemma at the heart of the game: whatever else you're packing, you've always got a flamethrower, which you can use to scare uncooked zombies away, **PlayStation** set whole packs of them ablaze, or create cunning traps with flaming scenery. This makes high scores easier, but also makes the



burning zombies faster and more aggressive. The game's basically a running battle to keep their numbers manageable – even the slow ones can overwhelm you if you're cornered.

The trouble is, this gets old fairly fast. Lawnmowers and explosives keep things going for a bit, and ridiculous moments help – sometimes whole waves of zombies come at you wearing tutus – but after you've ploughed yourway through

the first 600 you might as well have slaughtered a million. All it's really done is made us even sadder about the lack of Left 4 Dead on PS3. As for the fast vs slow crowd? We're not dead set on either. **Joel Snape** 



#### **Novastrike**

Format PSN download ETA Out now Pub Tiki Games



This low-rent top-down alien blaster doesn't even seem to be trying. Its looks are so-so – flat

blue oceans punctuated by muddy green islands – the shooting feels flabby and inaccurate and the missions play like a list of chores. Your objectives tend to be either 'blow up some ships' or, in a daring change of pace, 'blow up some buildings'. Not only is your tiny Scythe craft massively outclassed by faster and sturdier enemies, but your dreary guns take aeons to upgrade to anything close to spectacular. Even the allied ships that drop in to help you look embarrassed to be seen with your bulky ass. If you're desperate for some arcade-style

PlayStation. S

shooting, spend your shiny dollars on Super Stardust HD instead. **Rachel Penny** 



#### Spin Jam

Format PSN download ETA Out now Pub Sony



A puzzle relic so inane it makes Tetris seem like a serious take on Soviet architecture. Here it's

your job to destroy a flower by firing coloured sticky bubbles towards its spinning centre. Three or more bunched together fly off, carrying any attached odd-coloured bubbles with them, and smash into the flower's petals. The aim is to get rid of as many petals as possible, in the hope your gibbering cartoon opponent will give in, though it's more likely your will to live will go first. The petals regenerate over time, which only serves to underline the inherent pointlessness of the whole endeavour. As an added bonus, you can play a

PlayStation no-p

no-pressure, opponent-free version and be bored as well as baffled. **Rachel Penny** 

#### Need For Speed

Format PSP ETA Out now Pub EA

It's the also-ran double whammy for the latest Need For Speed as Midnight Club LA trounces it first on PS3 and now on PSP. The culprits this time? Barge-like handling and joyless backgrounds. Pass. 5 Paul Fitzpatrick

#### Crash Bandicoot 3

Format PSN download ETA Out now Pub Sony

Retro tiger riding, dinosaur baiting, and crate smashing. Still basically good fun — what game featuring a mango-eating time traveller hero isn't? — but only in a really, really old game with creaky platforming and super-linear level design sort of way.

5 Rachel Penny



#### Theme Park

Format PSN download ETA Out now Pub Sony



I remember this as a tightly designed management game that packed fairground fun and

a basic education about the economy into a vibrant cartoon world. Maybe it still is, but it's so lost underneath clumsy controls and badly rendered sick that you'll never find it. There are still rides to build, staff to hire and toilets to carefully position, but actually doing it is a menu-flapping nightmare and the difficulty curve can ruin you in seconds as rides break down and toilet queues build up. Then the staff slack off, the banks refuse your loans and all the time a buffoon is shouting at you to raise ticket prices WITHOUT EVER TELLING YOU



HOW! Save the memories and your pennies, by ignoring this relic. **Rachel Penny** 



Intelligent design

#### **Buzz!** Brain Bender

PSP quiz chases the Brain Training crowd

o right now I've got the same brain power as Henry the hoover, but I'm hoping to work my way up to a tumble dryer any day now. What am I talking about? Buzz's new twist on the brain training cleverness gauge, which sees it measuring your little grey cells in terms of kilojoules (and electrical appliances) instead of IQ or age.

The idea is you play games to exercise your brain in four ways: analysis, observation, calculation and memory. As with Buzz! Master Quiz on PSP, this is mostly designed for one person, with a series of multiple choice questions appearing on the left, and possible answers on the right mapped to the handheld's face buttons. Correct answers raise your kilojoules while trophies reward perfect rounds and winning streaks. There's a pass the PSP mode for six players to enjoy, too, in the unlikely event you're into competitive algebra.

#### **Bright spark**

Presentation-wise it's a mixed bag.

Jason Donovan's inane presenter
berk seems at odds with the whole
self-improvement angle (Nintendo
gets a proper Japanese doctor, we
get Joseph and his Technicolor lab
coat). But then sometimes the
balance tips the other way, and
the game strays a little too
close to maths lessons for
comfort, such as when
the questions are about
fractions instead of

mini-game memory tests.





☐ Ignore the lab coat, he's still a total twerp.



▲ Prove to mates that, yes, you are a swot.

They might be represented in pie and pizza slices, but they're still boring.

The whole thing only takes an hour to finish, but the point is you're supposed to play once a day to give your ever-shrinking intellect a regular workout. What you'll actually do is skip the boring options and go for the memory puzzles and sound games, because they're fun

and fast. It won't make you
Einstein, but it has to be
better for your aching
mind than playing
another urban racer.

**Rachel Penny** 



PlayStation near yo	ou difficient	15	14
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	EA	16 Jan	PS3
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	THO	23 Jan	PS3
Skate?	FA	23 Jan	PS3
Burn Zombie Burn	Pinnacle	Jan 09	PSN
Rag Doll Kung Fu	Sonv	Jan 09	PSN
Bolt	Disney	13 Feb	PS3
Hail To The Chimp	Gamecock	13 Feb	PS3
Red Faction Guerrilla	THO	13 Feb	PS3
Destroy All Humans: Path Of The Furon	THO	13 Feb	PS3
Killzone 2	Sony	20 Feb	PS3
Street Fighter IV	Capcom	20 Feb	PS3
Damnation	Codemasters	Feb 09	PS3
FEAR 2: Project Origin	Warner Bros	Feb 09	PS3
The Godfather II	FA Warrier Bros	Feb 09	PS3
Rise Of The Argonauts	Codemasters	Feb 09	PS3
Silent Hill Homecoming • 18	Konami	Feb 09	PS3
Wheelman	Midway	Feb 09	PS3
Heroes Over Europe	Atari	Mar 09	P53
	Codemasters	Mar 09	PS3
Operation Flashpoint 2: Dragon Rising  Resident Evil 5		Mar 09	PS3
Resistance Retribution	Capcom		
Rock Revolution	Sony	Mar 09	PSP
The Chronicles Of Riddick:	Konami	Mar 09	PS3
Assault On Dark Athena	Atari	Mar 09	PS3
Tom Clancy's Hawx	Ubisoft	Mar 09	PS3
UFC 2009 Undisputed	THQ	Mar 09	PS3
Wanted Weapons Of Fate	Warner Bros	Mar 09	PS3
Watchmen	Warner Bros	Mar 09	PSN
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania •	THQ	Mar 09	PS3
inFamous	Sony	May 09	PS3
Batman Arkham Asylum	Eidos	2009	PS3
Bayonetta	Sega	2009	PS3
Borderlands	Take Two	2009	PS3
DC Universe Online	SOE	2009	PS3
Ghostbusters	Atari	2009	PS3
God Of War III	Sony	2009	PS3
Gran Turismo 5	Sony	2009	PS3
Mafia II	Take Two	2009	PS3
MAG	Sony	2009	PS3
Prototype	Activision	2009	PS3
The Agency	SOE	2009	PS3
Aliens Colonial Marines	Sega	2009	PS3
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	Sony	2009	PS3



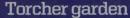
READY MADE EXCUSE #26

#### Pull a sickie for.. Tom Clancy's Hawx

I've been totting up all the unpaid overtime I've done this year and have decided to take some time in lieu. So see you 23 August 2010...

# onlinePS3





# Far Cry 2

#### In Africa the multiplayer is a case of safari, so good



ar Cry 2's online level editor feels like what might happen if Ross Kemp stopped meeting gangs and joined the Ground Force team – out with organic pest control, and in with a .50 cal machine gun turret mounted on the water feature. This, then, is Ultimate Ground Force – a customisable garden of flimsy cover, explosive material, and surprisingly expansive plants.

The usual multiplayer modes are all here: Capture The Diamonds switches flags for shiny stones, and Uprising is your basic VIP-based squad setup. This familiarity can make FC2 seem like Call Of Duty 4's pyromaniac little brother –

the grizzled mercs of Far Cry can take more punishment than their special forces counterparts, but veterans of COD will feel at home, dashing for cover, popping exposed targets as they go. It's the level creation that sets Far Cry 2 apart from other shooters though; the ability to create your own virtual world, right down to each individual shrub. And then blow it to tiny pieces.

#### **Green fingers**

Loading up the map editor for the first time is daunting – sandbox has never been a more appropriate term, because virgin levels are barren like the desert wastes of Africa. Once the basics of altering terrain and placing objects have been mastered, you'll begin to feel like you're rewriting Genesis with the help of Alan Titchmarsh and Andy McNab. It's a huge undertaking, but if you devote enough time to the map editor you can create almost anything you can imagine. Post-industrial jungle

junkyard? Check. War-torn shanty town? Check. Bob Ross-style happy little forest? Er, sort of. By comparison, fiddling with crates in Halo 3's Forge has all the creative potential of a half-empty bucket of Lego.

In a clear statement of incendiary intent, an entire section of the map editor is dedicated just to explosives. Far Cry 2's destructible environments are a big deal both on and offline foliage can be shredded with gunfire, a tossed Molotov will consume swathes of verdant jungle, and a well placed barrel of rocket fuel next to your tin shack will literally blow your cover when the bullets start flying. All of which adds a huge tactical element to the map creation process - you'll have to factor in not only what to put into your level, but what you'll allow players to blow back out again, and how the level will function when they do.

Taking a finished level online for the first time is a genuine rush, and Far

#### What you do in... Far Cry 2 \*\*Watchingyour \*\* 10% Being sed about

reedback obsessively.

7% Taking a break from making stuff and shooting men.

12% Feeling sad at all the empty sand you've got to fill.

1.0% Being sad about the less-than-enthusiastic feedback you're getting.
50% Deciding your level needs just a little bit mare bang.

13% Spelling your name in ferns like a giant Art Attack





▲ The biggest challenge is stopping your level from looking like a sandpit. Big green trees help.

PlayStation.

Cry's feedback system will tell you what others think of your efforts. The only problem is that, like in LittleBigPlanet, if your creation doesn't get recognition fast enough it'll quickly slide down the seemingly endless list of custom levels on offer. For the most part these other levels are rubbish nothing more than flat, grey cubes with all the buildings in a straight line, like Milton Keynes but with assault trucks for buses. But the level of creativity on a select few is so staggering you'll spend more time sightseeing than shooting like one we downloaded called Millennium Falcon, in which a devoted Star Wars fan has recreated the Tatooine space port Mos Eisley, along with a detailed Solo's spaceship, which you can even go inside (inside!).

The sheer depth may be the biggest problem for most casual users, though. It takes hours to create something special, and you'll want to make sure it plays properly before you publish it, lest one of your fellow gamers gets stuck in a hole and gives you a duff rating. There's also the niggling feeling that even if you spend hours perfecting your masterpiece, it still won't play as well as a level designed by the experts. It's what they get paid for, after all. The maps do have to pass a series of validation checks before they can be published but there's still plenty of scope for aetting it very wrong. Spawn points, team bases and weapons can all unbalance the game if they're scattered about at random. This adds a sense of unpredictability to the multiplayer maps that some might welcome, but many will feel that level design is something best left to the professionals. Those who do persevere though, will discover that, thanks to Far Cry 2,

getting creative with your gunplay is no longer the preserve of the PC community. And that has to be a good thing.

**Matt Elliott** 



### Online round-up

With Leon Hurley



Sometimes you play a game online and it's just not your night. You get trounced and battered at every turn, suffering abject humiliation at the hands of people who are probably younger and definitely better than you. **Endwar** is a lot like that, only in slow

motion. Deploying troops, forming strategies and moving around the map is full of suspense – the gradual build of tension is exciting even when you're shouting like a contestant on 'The World's Most Disobedient Tank'. Shame none of my strategies work, though. Admittedly I only have two: "Attack!" or "Retreat!" but you'd think the first one would get the occasional freak result. Apparently not.

On paper **007 Quantum Of Solace** sounds great. COD-flavoured multiplayer with a Rainbow Six Vegas-style cover system; perks in the form of gadgets that either upgrade existing abilities or add new ones, plus some clever game modes – like one player as Bond



against everyone else. It just has no sparkle. Instead it feels like someone's cut all the best bits out of some other games, stitched it all together and then screamed "It's alive!" despite all evidence to the contrary. Playing Daniel Craig is only slightly more exciting than switching the machine on in the first place and once that's passed you're left with a slower, blander version of Call Of Duty.



After all the hype about the CGI trailer I'm actually holding the pad in rny hands, playing the **Killzone 2 Beta**, and I still don't believe it's real. Nothing should look this good, especially online. I've played finished games that strip out all the pretty and still stron off in a

laggy hissy fit if more than three players show up. It's a weighty, meaty shooter online with guns like tubes full of angry thunder. My only issue is the stupid decision to activate precision aim by clicking the right stick – it's unusable. You can change it to 13 but it's still 'click on, click off' rather than a more instinctive 'hold and release'. Note to Guerrilla – please change it.

# Download of the month

I'm starting to regret saving all those Little Sisters. Sweet angelic children my ass. In the **Bioshock Challenge Rooms** (£6.29) they're just trouble magnets, hell bent on



rushing off into whatever danger they can find – rooms full of enemies (a level called The I In Team) or the top of a broken Ferris wheel that needs its power restored (A Shocking Turn Of Events). And Mr Bubbles isn't around to help this time because I killed him. Admittedly Worlds Of Hurt, the other room, is just full of Splicers to fight but I'm sure it's a Lil' Sister's fault somewhere along the line. But, that said, this is an excellent addition to Bioshock, creating an evening's worth of fresh, exciting challenges that make a return to Rapture well worth the fee.

# mailaopm



Yet more LittleBigLove, complaining about Christmas, a bargain hunter writes and a quick Brothers In Arms reader review.

#### **Drought defences**

I hate the way that games have their own little season in which all the good stuff comes out - I'm already saving some games for the next drought. Two months ago I was sat here bored stupid of Soulcalibur IV, but now I have Fallout 3, Dead Space, Far Cry 2 and Motorstorm: Pacific Rift to do before Resistance 2 and LittleBigPlanet, Mirror's Edge and tons of others. To hell with it, I say! I'm saving Dead Space and Motorstorm 2 for when I'm bored out of my head in a few months' time. Have you noticed the whole 'no

From PlayStation hopes and fears to technical queries, this is the place to come for answers

Email us at opm@futurenet.com or write to Letters, OPM, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

games... no games... TONS OF GAMES... no games' thing? Jordan Wray, by email

Christmas, as Bono and celebrity friends poignantly noted, is a time of dread and fear. And with more AAA games around than there are donkeys in mangers, none of us have the time or cash to play them all. Our advice? Go for stuff like Fallout 3 and Dead Space first, before they're ruined by spoilers, then lock yourself away for a massive LBP session just as the first apocalyptic family row kicks off, and head for the sunnier (but shootier) climes of Far Cry 2 just as the snow starts to fall.



I was sat in my maths GCSE retake lesson the other day and, as always, I was bored out of my brain, so I played my music on the sly and wandered off into a daydream. I realised that after an hour's lesson I had drawn an entire LittleBigPlanet level over two pages of my maths book. I've got the design bug whenever I start to drift off I realise I'm either drawing little ramps or creatures, or making them out of bits of ruler off the floor. This game has totally changed my spare time; I just sit thinking about new



levels and new contraptions. LittleBigPlanet really does collect all your little thoughts and ideas, and it also passes the time as I fall asleep in maths. Steve James, by email

If LittleBigPlanet had been around during our forced march through the education system we would have spent the days doodling Da Vinci-style contraptions rather than violent revenge fantasies about the PE teacher with the wandering eye. Da Vinci used Tipp-Ex, right? Have a subscription to Official PlayStation Magazine to help keep you awake.



Kenneth Talbot, Manchester **Music** Everything from Rammstein to Frank Sinatra, with a little happy hardcore thrown in, too. Photo Me and mates, dozens of game and film wallpapers, tattoo designs and a healthy amount

of female celebrity pics

What's on my hard drive **■ Video** Resi 5 and Tomb Raider trailers, random episodes of Family Guy. - Game Everything currently on the Store. Faves: Wipeout HD, Siren and the demented Linger In Shadows. Friends Random online chums, a few PS3-owning mates and FIFA buddies from work, Dynamo Kebab FTW!

#### Interplanetary love

When I was about 12 I had a recurring dream that I was playing the best game I'd ever laid eyes on - it had been made in gaming heaven. And now my dreams have been answered with LBP. Sonic and Mario stand aside, because little sackboy needs room for all the levels currently being made. There's always something new to play and pull apart and put back together again. Sackboy is the starting point of my great career as a semi-pro games developer without all the complicated code to memorise. My only problem now is what to make first! Roll on LittleBigPlanet 2. William Parker, by email

Your letters

LittleBigPlanet really is an incredible piece of work. A side effect of spending so much time in its Create mode over the last few weeks is that we've now come to realise that game design isn't all cigars, champagne and improbably high Metacritic scores. In fact it's really, really hard. As a result we're now working our way through a very long list of apology letters to the unsung talents behind all the sub-5/10 games we've brutalised over the years. "Dear Baja: Edge Of Control..."

#### **Glory hunter**

I came to the Uncharted party fashionably late, buying it a few months after it was released. It's such a great game I never thought I'd put it down, but after I'd finished 64% of it COD4 landed on my doorstep and took over my life. All the while Uncharted was gathering dust and every time I thought about going back and playing it I was put off by the fact I'd forgotten most of the plot and the controls. Then suddenly these little things called Trophies came along and Uncharted supported them. Now a new lease of life was brought to the game! Since then I've completed it and have the silverware to show for it, all thanks to the introduction of the Trophy system, without which I'm not sure I'd have ever gone back and would have missed out on the great game and story. So that's why I like Trophies! I feel sorry for those who completed it before the firmware update and have to do it all again.

Ross Betts, by email

Beware the Trophy addiction. One minute you're just finding a few extra treasures on the jungle floor, next thing you're playing any piece of tat kid's game for shiny virtual cups.

#### Bargain bin dipper

It never ceases to amaze me just how cheap PS2 games have become, with only rarities like Zone Of The Enders 2 selling for anything like a sensible price. Splinter Cell for a penny? Sold, I say! You should feature these bargain games in the mag - maybe a possible PlayStation Legends replacement? The same decrease in price happened to PS1 titles years back, but it's better this time round, because there are more quality games on the sixth-generation console than on the fifth. So in between big PS3 releases we can all enjoy a cheap romp we never got around to before. Joy of joys! Ciaran McConville, by email



A nice idea, were it not for the fact our HD-attuned eyes now reject anything in standard definition like a hastily transplanted pig's heart. Still, we'd be interesting in hearing any other ideas for how to beat the Credit Cataclysm.

#### Hella weak

Will all my old PSP

accessories work with the new

All your

peripherals for the PSP 2000

can be used with

3000, except for the cradle/stand.

☑ Brothers In Arms is

a thinker not a fighter.

Do not want.

the new PSP

I was recently having my afternoon session of intellectual reading, armed with no less than half a piece of cheesy toast and the very latest copy of Official PlayStation Magazine, and I found myself at the absolute abomination Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway. After a quick harrumph and ruffling of the magazine I gave it a second read, and then found myself staring in absolute astonishment at how cheap the game looked. I then decided to investigate further and watch the trailer... my suspicions were correct. My question is this: 'How can a huge games publisher like Ubisoft let a game

be released that looks like it's been excreted out the back end of a penguin?'

I do understand that the game's developer Gearbox has ported games like Half-Life and Counter Strike (both classics). but I just don't think the Brothers In Arms series has the cojones to stand up to the likes of Call Of Duty and Medal Of Honor. I am genuinely disappointed - for me it's the same as The History Channel: Battle For The Pacific.

Ben Reid, by email

Cease fire, soldier. We actually gave Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway a partially positive 7/10 salute. It certainly can't match Call Of Duty for sheer punch, but there may be players out there who are keen to sample the more cerebral, squadbased mechanics of Gearbox's game? More cerebral? Anyone?

# Off the **Cal**

Choice cuts from the OPM Facebook group

Dead Space "So far I have screamed out loud about 30 times and I'm only just starting the third level."

Joe McLachlan

Lara lethargy "I just feel there's only so much raiding tombs and shooting things as a sex goddess that one can do." Richard Mead

**Tache tease** "I was nicknamed 'Big Boss' in school because of my facial hair and loved every minute of it."

**Kevin Nolan** 

Leet speak "IAVHNSIWROTFLOL

WMPIAC... I am very happy now so I will roll on the floor laughing out loud with my p\*\*\* in a clamp."

**Christopher Larsson** 

Awful joke "I got christened with a flamethrower - that was a baptism of fire. Still, the vicar was wearing a gorilla suit, which was a blessing in disguise."

Ian Wilson

Woo woe "That's enough woo-ing for one night, don't you think? It's not even past watershed!"

Jen Stunt

**Ball games** "I am the king teabagger. It's in no way childish." Stewie Hitchcock

Send your questions to: opm@futurenet.com



### directory PS3

PS3 buyer's guide



# PS3 Essential collection

Build the ultimate PS3 library with our no-filler guide to the best next-gen games so far

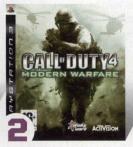


#### Platformer LittleBigPlanet

Unleash your inner Miyamoto by creating and sharing your own levels online using the brilliantly simple but canyon-deep editing tools in Sony's phenomenal platformer. Absolutely essential.



Pub Sony
Dev Media Molecule



#### Shooter Call Of Duty 4 Modern Warfare

The SAS and US Marines invite you to fight the war on terror as Call Of Duty dumps WW2 for a modern-day setting. A beautiful, brutal and near flawless shooter.



Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward



#### Grand Theft Auto IV

It's everything you love about GTA – the twisted characters, epic missions and savage humour – polished to perfection. A true modern masterpiece.



Pub Rockstar Games
Dev Rockstar North



### Stealth Metal Gear Solid 4 Guns Of The Patriots

A typically esoteric but masterful end to Snake's saga, blending beautifully immersive action with a lifetime's worth of cut-scenes. Divisive but essential.



Pub Konami Dev Konami Productions



#### Platformer Bioshock

Epic first-person adventure set in a ruined underwater city that combines brilliant genetic weapons with beautiful design, tons of atmosphere, and a genuinely affecting story.



Pub 2K Games Dev 2K Marin



### Action-Adventure Uncharted Drake's Fortune

Treasure hunter Nathan Drake is after the fabled gold of El Dorado in this superb blend of action and physical puzzling. Think Gears Of War meets Tomb Raider.



**Pub** Sony **Dev** Naughty Dog



#### Resistance 2

A sequel that masterfully surpasses the original. Nathan Hale returns to fight bigger aliens on American soil and delivers on gameplay, guns and polish.



Pub Sony Dev Insomniac



#### Platformer Ratchet & Clank Tools Of Destruction

Platforming royalty return to save the galaxy. Exquisite graphics and a riotous arsenal of comedy weapons make this the pair's best interstellar outing yet.



Pub Sony Dev Insomniac



#### <sub>Music</sub> SingStar

Sony's much-loved karaoke game steps up to next-gen with a neater interface, online options and tons of tunes via SingStore. Outkast's Hey Ya and Killers' Mr Brightside are highlights.



Pub Sony
Dev SCE Studios London



#### Fallout 3

The natural successor to Oblivion's RPG throne plays out in a post-apocalyptic America with Liam Neeson as your AWOL dad. An epic adventure without the self-indulgent sprawl.



Pub Bethesda Softworks
Dev Bethesda Game Studos







#### Prince Of Persia The prince's lovely new squeeze - Elika - is a



#### GTA IV Niko's idiot cousin Roman tempts our hero to Liberty City with his RS, then



#### Half-Life 2

urveys show Gordon Freeman's oftly spoken sidekick Alyx is ne character lonely gamers are lost likely to fall in love with.





#### Fallout 3





#### Action Mirror's Edge

A real Marmite game. We loved it for the thrill of leaping across the glistening rooftops of a suspiciously perfect future city while pursued by trigger-happy cops. Idiots, meanwhile, didn't.



Pub EA
Dev DICE



#### Sports FIFA 09

Impressively strong core gameplay on the pitch, ten-on-ten online matches and a new multiseason Be A Pro mode make this the top-scoring football choice on PS3.



Pub EA
Dev EA Canada



#### Sports PES 09

Can't match FIFA for licences. but the new Champions League and Become A Legend modes add depth and confirm PES's status as the traditionalist's footy game of choice.



Pub Konami Dev Konami



Shooter

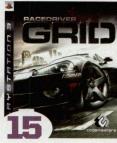
Far Cry 2

there's malaria to deal with, too. Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft Montreal

Dry, dusty, African sandbox run-and-gun action with an ace

level editor. Not only do you have

to avoid the bullets in your hunt for arms dealer The Jackal.



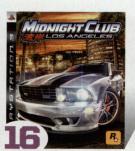
#### Racer **Race Driver** Grid

Straight from the TOCA garage and into first place. Smooth mechanics, aggressive races and fine-tuned cars that make this the best racer yet on PS3.



**Pub** Codemasters **Dev** Codemasters





#### Racer Midnight Club

Los Angeles

Rockstar's street racer comes of age, rediscovering tuner culture's West Coast roots with a superb recreation of the City Of Angels and punchy car handling.



**Pub** Rockstar Games **Dev** Rockstar San Diego



#### Music

**Guitar Hero World Tour** 

Bigger, better, rockier. Battles are out, the set list is super strong, drums and vocals mean you don't need to wait for Rock Band 2, plus there's a studio too!



**Pub** Activision **Dev** Neversoft



#### Fighter Soulcalibur IV

Darth Vader aside, this is essential stuff. The swordplay is as accessible and strong as ever, with deep character customisation and online play completing the package.



Pub Ubisoft **Dev** Namco



#### Racer **Burnout Paradise**

The ultra-fast crash-obsessed racer goes open-world with no menus and no lobbies – just a massive city packed with races, events and hidden routes. DLC content is making it even better.



**Pub** EA **Dev** Criterion Games



#### Action **Dead Space**

Interstellar survival horror that robs from Bioshock, Resident Evil 4 and Event Horizon, but gets away with it thanks to looking beautiful, playing brilliantly and delivering some very big scares.



**Dev** EA Redwood Shores



#### Metal Gear Solid 4

The MK II Metal Gear is a diddy robot displaying Otacon's face, which Snake controls using an in-game Sixaxis.



#### Fallout 3



#### **Portal**



#### **Call Of Duty 4**

Gaz is your heroic, loveable, best bloody mate anyone could ever *ive* SAS comrade who doe ake the final credits. Snif

# PlayStation ® Official Magazine - UK

# On your disc

So here they are, the winter blues. Never fear, Ratchet is here, and I've got six new demos to keep you busy. Too bloated from all the delicious Christmas food you've been scoffing to attempt any real sport? Get your athletic

kicks with NHL 09, NBA Live 09 and Facebreaker instead. Want to fulfil that new year's resolution to learn a new skill?

Teach yourself to rock out with Guitar Hero World Tour. Just want to blow things up? Then you'll be wanting Mercenaries 2: World In Flames. And to sweeten the deal I've thrown in 19 of the best demos from our archives, and

unmissable videos, too. **Rachel Penny** Agenda editor







Guitar Hero World Tour

The massive music series returns to the stage, and this time it's brought microphones and a drum kit along for the ride. Prove your rock credentials by blasting out tracks including Livin' On A Prayer, Rebel Yell, Are You Gonna Go My Way and the embarrassing Dad's favourite, Eye Of The Tiger.

#### This month's exclusive highlights...



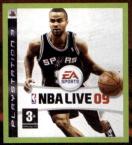
Mercenaries 2:
World In Flames
Carve a path of destruction through

Carve a path of destruction through Venezuela in the action game that's all about getting paid for making mess.



NHL 09

If you like speed, brutal action, super tight controls and wearing massive gloves, then this is the only ice hockey game you need to play.



**NBA Live 09** 

Hit the court with b-ball's biggest names. Play a Celtics vs Lakers match and try out the new features – such as the vicious ankle-breaker move.



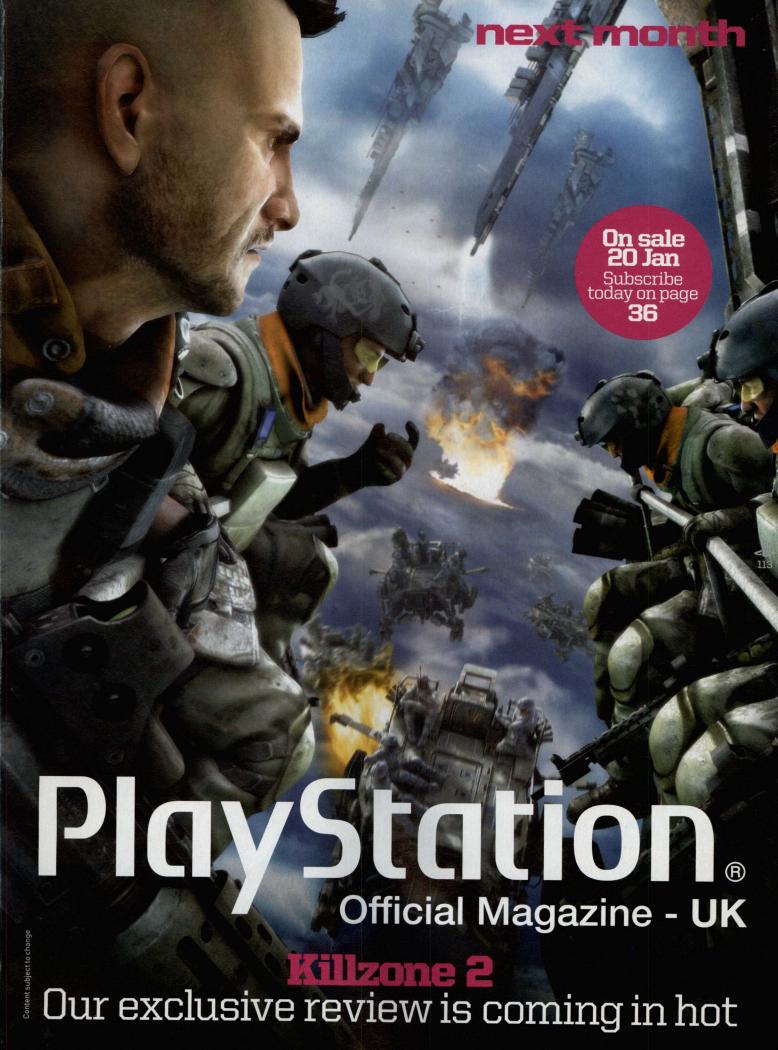
Facebreaker

This mug-mashing boxer might look like a cartoon, but it packs a mean punch. You even get to take a shot at sex-tape celebrity Kim Kardashian.



What if my disc doesn't work? If it definitely doesn't work, send the disc to Disc Returns, OPM, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW and we'll replace it. You can also email

Also on the disc this month Playable Beijing 2008, The Last Guy, Soulcalibur IV, WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2009, Fracture, Pure, Hail To The Chimp, NHL 2K9, Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Motorstorm: Pacific Rift, 1942: Joint Strike, FIFA 09, Echochrome, Pixeljunk Eden, Race Driver Grid, Guitar Hero Aerosmith, Everybody's Golf World Tour, Wolf Of The Battlefield: Commando 3, Civilization Revolution, Top Spin 3 Video Prince Of Persia, Pro Evolution Soccer 2009, Tomb Raider Underworld, Valkyria Chronicles.



PlayStation Official Magazine UK

#### whois...

# Altair

**PlayStation** 

Assassin's Creed's mystery man

Altair (pronounced Al-tie-ear) is Arabic and means 'flying eagle', but the name of the man you play is, in fact, Desmond Miles. Confusing, yes, but all to do with Assassin's Creed's pseudoscientific storyline about 'genetic memories' and a DNA-decoding machine called the Animus. Abstergo Industries, its creator, is after the location of something very powerful hidden in 1191's Holy Lands. It's holding Des against his will, and is forcing him to relive the assassin's life of his stab-happy ancestor. The more time he spends inside the Animus the more the lines between the shadowy Altair and Desmond blur...

#### Smoothest moves

#### Flashing blade

Altair's low-visibility knif is vicious but somehow merciful in its swiftness weapon of stealth Altair can usually take out his mark before he feels the long sword of the

Leap Of Faith

Rarely actually nece the Leap Of Faith is

stretching perspective, the eagle's shriek, the rush of

air... and how can you not love popping out of the hay,



#### Let's pray together

groups of monks to snea past guards and avoid human camouflage, and the perfect remedy for the wkward post-murder ocial situations.

Steeple chase

To fill in his map, Altair must climb every tower and spire in a district, and

some – such as the giant cathedral in Acre – are

staggeringly tall. Despite the beauty of the view,

standing on top of them is enough to give David Blaine The Fear.



#### Friends and foes

As one of the nine targets Altairis initially given, Talal is a an all-round bad sort. An arrogant, spiteful and vicious slave trader, his death is



#### Lucy Stillman

You might recognise Lucy, the blonde scientist in the game's present-day sections. Why, it's TV's Kristen Bell, or Elle Bishop of Heroes, renting out her pretty face and expert vocal chords. [Checks wallet for spare change.]



Protected by both their Christian faith and their masses of armour, these hard-to-kill thugs lurk in every area. Collect their deaths quietly, or suffer badly at their hands.



Jerusalem faiths or a calamitous flashpoint, depending Saracen forces and a target for Crusaders.

With its cool blue filters

terrifying hospital (also based on reality) the Acre of



#### Kingdom

The huge expanses beyond the walls of the cities – hidden valleys, scattered villages and winding mountain



One of gaming's true moral tests, these incredibly irritating civilians stick to you like loony groupies, tripping you up and even throwing rocks at you.

#### Assassin's trivia

Killing grounds



stronghold of the assassins, Masyaf, was indeed besieged medieval sultan Saladin's forces. In fact, it's still standing today. You can find it in Cyprus, if that helps)



A sequel is coming - it's a trilogy - but Ubisoft is in no rush. Possible locations include Peru, Mexico, and the Atlantis-like city of Yonaguni in Japan.



What is Abstergo looking for? The Holy Grail, among other things - and it already has some pretty amazing stuff, including artefacts (it doesn't dare use) which manipulate time. Altair would be more daring if he got hold of them.



The word 'assassin' comes from the Arabic 'hashishiyah', which means hashish user The name comes from the lore that followers of a medieval sect drugged themselves before carrying out





















# The Best Games Of 2008

The results of this year's Golden Joystick Awards are in and you can now find who has claimed the ultimate gaming accolade, a **Golden Joystick Award**.

Whether you're a PC, Playstation, Nintendo or Xbox fan you can find out which game was victorious as well as the **Virgin Media Ultimate Game of the Year**.

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